TRIPLE LIFE OF THE AGED

HOUTZ

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REV. A. HOUTZ

Triple Life of the Aged

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PHILADELPHIA:
REFORMED CHURCH PUBLICATION BOARD
1911

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.H65

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Introduction

Much has been written in the interest of childhood, youthhood and middle age, but little comparatively has been written in the interest of old age. This period of life has been too much ignored by writers. Old age is looked upon with too much indifference and treated as a period of life which is practically blank, as the most passive and inactive period of human life.

In this book the author endeavors to show that old age is an exceedingly interesting period of life, that the aged live a threefold life. He lives in the Past by memory, in the Present by experience, and in the Future by faith and hope. He endeavors thus to interpret the mind and heart of the aged, and shows that their time is fully occupied in the recollections of the past, in the experiences of the present, and in the hope and anticipated joys of the future.

The author being now an aged man has written from experience and will accompany his aged readers in living over the past, in dealing with the present conditions of life, and in viewing from Mount Pisgah the Heavenly Canaan, their promised home and inheritance. A. H.

CHAPTER I.

THE AGED

When Joseph brought his aged father down to Egypt and introduced him to Pharaoh, the latter asked him the question, "How old art thou?" *Gen. 47:8.* At that time Jacob was 130 years old, but lived to be 147 years old. This was a great age, but it was less than that of his ancestors. His father Isaac lived to be 180 years old, his grand-father, Abraham, lived to be 175 years old; and his great grand-father, Terah, lived to be 205 years old.

The usual period of human life seldom extends to more than three score and ten years; and if by reason of strength to four score years. Old age is promised in the fifth commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days

may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Of old age it is said, "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." *Job 16:31.* Old age is a period of life which only a few attain. It is estimated that on an average only one in twenty reach three score and ten years. It is supposed that one-fourth die in childhood, and one-half die before they reach thirty-five years of age. Many die between the age of thirty-five and that of sixty; and very rarely do we hear of one living beyond eighty or ninety.

Before the Flood many lived from seven hundred to eight hundred years. Methusalah lived to the great age of nine hundred and sixty-nine. In Abraham's time the age limit was one hundred and seventy-five years, and in the time of Moses it was reduced to seventy or eighty years. While this seems to be an age that is attainable, very few reach it. Hu-

man life is attended with many dangers, seen and unseen. The poet has truthfully said:

"Dangers stand thick through all the ground
to push us to the tomb,
And fierce diseases wait around, to hurry
mortals home."

Many like the May flowers live only a few days and then fade and die. Many are cut down in the prime of life. While here and there we see a man or woman ladened with years.

We have often seen men who were young at sixty; and have pitied others who were old at forty.

Some look aged early on account of labor, sorrow, affliction and constitutional weakness; others become old early by dissipation and sin; the wicked often do not live out half their time.

The mere continuation of life is marvelous. How mysteriously is life sustained! Think of the pulsations of the heart, the inspiration and respiration of the

lungs. How many vessels must be active so that the machine may not stand still. Well has Watts said:

"Our life contains a thousand springs
And dies if one be gone,
Strange that a harp of a thousand strings,
Should keep in tune so long."

Is it not marvelous that life is maintained so long amid the many dangers to which we are exposed.

It is said that centuries are necessary for the oaks growth. At last, loaded with years, it withers, is born down to the earth and passes away. Should we wonder that man who is as grass and as the flower of the field, should in a few years wither away and die? It is true some aged people are permitted to see their grand children, and even their great-grand children, but they are few.

In *Deut. 34:7* we read: "Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." And yet this

same Moses said, "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." *Ps. 90:10.* How true the poem:

My days, my weeks, my months, my years,
Fly rapid as the whirling spheres;
The grave is near the cradle scene,
How swift the moments pass between."

Life is as a tale that is told, and is as a dream. Truly one generation after another passes away. In the grave-yards of England they bury the dead upon one another. And in America the White man's plow turns the Red man's ashes. Ask the aged what he thinks of life, and he will say that it is a vapor, a shadow, a passing cloud.

Aged people are sometimes compared to the few lonely oaks that are scattered here and there over the farm, and are the remnants of a great forest. They survived the tempests to which they had

been exposed, and were spared from the woodman. These few great oaks have weathered the storms of centuries; and if they could speak would tell many a thrilling story of tempest and cyclone. They would tell us how their silvan companions one after another succumbed to tempest and decay, or were cruelly felled by the woodman's ax. They would thus tell why they stand alone in solitary places.

So it is with the aged man. Early in life he was surrounded with many companions. He associated with them and enjoyed their company. But now they are gone, and he spends his days in solitude.

It is true he is still surrounded by the living, the young and the middle aged. But even these are of another generation, they belong to the new incoming one. The generation to which he belonged has passed away, and the present one is a new generation to him. He

feels that the early companions of his life have disappeared, and that he himself is like the oak that stands alone in the field.

Have you ever wondered how aged people pass their time? What are their thoughts, feelings and aspirations? We shall endeavor to assist you to better understand them, and show in what respect they live a triple life.

Mankind has lived in the Past. He now lives in the Present, and will live in the future. We shall not only live in the future, but we shall also live in another world quite different from the present one. So the aged through their memory live in the Past, by experience they live in the Present, and by faith and hope they live in the Future. We shall endeavor to show how the aged pass their time in their apparent loneliness, what thoughts occupy their minds, and what feelings thrill their souls. We hope to assist you to better understand

the aged ones for whom you must perhaps care and to whom you must minister.

The Aged Live in the Past

Part First

CHAPTER II.

LOCAL SCENES

Old age is the time of peculiar memories. Indeed it is the age of memory. The aged are naturally inclined to call to mind the events of the past. They seem to live over the past in their memory. They often speak of the changes that have taken place during their past life.

How different are the features of the country now from what they were in their childhood days. They remember the time when a large part of the locality in which they now live was a forest. Great outstretching oaks and towering pines were seen in every direction. The land had to be cleared for agricultural purposes. First the trees were felled and then the trunks cut into con-

venient lengths to handle. The logs were then rolled on great piles and burned.

Later on the brush and surface roots were grubbed out, and put on piles and burned. Now the new ground was ready for the crude shovel plow. This was usually drawn by two horses or a yoke of slow but surefooted oxen. The seed was then sown broadcast upon the virgin soil.

The work of clearing the new ground was hard and dirty as the men were obliged to handle much charred wood. If we now had the fine timber that was thus destroyed in those pioneer days we might consider ourselves well off. In some localities where the land was covered with stones, it was necessary to pick them up and haul them off the field. They were either put on large piles or were used in building stone fences.

Wild game was abundant. The rabbit, squirrel, quail and pheasant were plentiful. Even the deer and bear were

not rare. When the writer of this book was a little boy, early on a Christmas morning after a snow had fallen, he saw a large wild buck running through Lower Market Street of his native town, Milton Pa. The deer was closely pursued by a pack of hounds which had driven it from its mountain home. Many flocks of wild pigeons were seen every spring and fall. Pigeon catching was a great sport, and many a pigeon potpie was served in those days. The streams abounded with fish. The smaller streams teemed with chubs, sunfish, catfish, eels, pike and trout, and some rivers contained salmon and shad. Before the dams were put in the Susquehanna River, shad came up the North Branch of this river as far as Espy where a shad fishery was located. To this town people came a distance of several miles with their wagons for a supply of shad.

Hunting and fishing in those days were attended with success. They usu-

ally fished with hook and line, gig, outline, hoop-net and seine. Then there was no law that forbid taking certain kinds of fish or game at certain seasons. You could fish and hunt with any thing and catch any thing, no one daring to molest or make afraid.

The hunting spirit of that age is illustrated by an incident that occurred at Sinnamahoning, Pa., when that town was a lumber camp. A number of lumbermen with their families lived in the village. As they were destitute of Church privileges, the Lutheran brethren thought it would be a good place to establish a home mission. Accordingly a minister properly equipped was sent there. As he wore a high silk hat and was dressed in a suit of black broadcloth the people who were not accustomed to such a sight gazed upon him in amazement. He called upon the different homes and told the people who he was, and invited them to come to the sawmill on Sunday morn-

ing where he would preach for them. A number of men, women and children were present. Some of the men brought their guns and hounds with them as they expected to have a deer hunt after preaching was over. Seats were made out of the newly sawed lumber and the services began. The men sat with their hats on, and a number smoked their pipes and laughed and talked to each other during the preaching. The minister felt very much depressed at the conduct of his audience. Finally some one exclaimed, "There goes a deer!" The men bent on hunting, took their guns and dogs and went in pursuit of the deer. The yelling of hounds and the shouting of the men were distracting. The congregation was almost broken up and the minister was very much discouraged, and in a moment of despair said, "It is all in vain!" He felt that there was no use in preaching to such a distracted audience. An old man who

sat near heard these despairing words of the minister and misapprehending their meaning said, "No, it is not all in vain, I bet if my dog gets the scent of that deer they will get it."

CHAPTER III.

THE DOMESTIC SCENES

The log-house was very common in those days. This was usually one and a half stories high. There being plenty of timber, straight trees were selected, and cut into logs of proper lengths. These were hewn and notched at the ends, and laid up so as to lock each other at the corners of the building. The crevices between the logs were then filled in with small pieces of wood and clay. The ventilation was so abundant that the people never lacked fresh air in their homes.

The floor boards were seldom carpeted, but were often scrubbed with the hickory splint broom. The ceiling not being plastered, the wide pine floor boards of the second story served as the

ceiling of the first story, leaving the joists exposed. Whenever a fresh fire was started in the stove or on the hearth, the heat would effect the boards and cause them to crack and snap. This was somewhat alarming to the children and superstitious. Many a house in those days was supposed to be haunted on account of these strange sounds.

The large fire-place with its and-irons and crane was common. The house in winter was warmed by a large wood stove or by a fire on the hearth. The tallow candle and the fat-lamp furnished the light within the house, and a tin lantern with perforated sides and a piece of candle within, furnished light for outdoor purposes. The iron Dutch oven was used on the hearth, and the large oval bake oven was usually located in the rear of the house. The ashes derived from the wood burned as fuel, was utilized in making lye. These were put in a lye leach which was usually in

the form of a barrel, or an inverted pyramid, and then water was poured on them. As the water passed through the ashes, it took up the alkali and formed the lye. This had a dark appearance like coffee or cider. When the writer of this book was a very little boy, he wandered out to the lye leach, and supposing the lye was cider, drank some of it. This very nearly cost his life. By the timely discovery of the mistake, and the prompt application of a remedy, his life was spared.

With the lye and the meat scraps which had accumulated the women manufactured both soft and hard soap. At that time there were very few soap factories in the country.

The hickory splint broom was used in scrubbing the bare floors, and the corn broom for the finer work in the house.

The corrugated wash board and tub were used in washing, and the big iron kettle suspended over a fire, was used

for heating water for washing, butchering and making soap.

The splint bottom chair, the wooden dough-tray and the heavy rocking cradle were in common use.

Mush and milk was a common dish for supper in the fall and winter; and "snits and knep" was a much relished dish for dinner. This consisted of dried sweet apples and dumplings cooked with fat pork. This dish is now seldom seen. It is a thing of the past. The aged love to think of this palatable dish of early days and relish even the recollection of it.

Apple-butter was usually the second spread on the bread, and often it was the first and only spread. The cider making and the apple-butter boiling were important events in those days. It was customary for almost every family to fatten from two to four porkers, weighing from two hundred to three hundred pounds. When butchering time came,

they were killed, and the shoulders and hams salted and smoked for the years supply of meat. Some of the sausages were salted down for summer use, and some were smoked and dried for winter use.

The neighbors helped each other in the butchering season. The meat for sausage was cut with the meat axe, one in each hand of a man. The skins were filled either by the "hand and stomach stuffer," or by a "lever stuffer." The former process was considered killing business.

While the good mother had the frying pan full of meat over the chimney fire, the griddle hanging from the crane baking the buckwheat cakes, and the coffee can steaming with boiling coffee, the hungry children waited patiently for their breakfast.

Most every home was blessed with a large family. It was not unusual to see from six to ten children in one family,

and occasionally from twelve to eighteen children. To feed and clothe the children taxed every energy of the parents.

In summer the children generally went bare-footed. In winter they and the women wore calfskin shoes and the men heavy kip boots. These were all hand-made and were strong and serviceable. Sometimes the country children and women in walking to the church or to town, to save their shoes, would carry them and walk barefooted, until they came near the church or town, and then put them on.

CHAPTER IV.

INDUSTRIAL SCENES

In those days flax and wool were spun by the mothers and daughters, and then woven into linen, blankets and cloth. These were called home-spun goods. There are now in use some very fine blankets and coverlets which were spun sixty or seventy years ago by our ancestors. Some of these spreads were very artistic, having birds, trees and houses woven into them. They are now prized very highly as heir-looms. The stockings, mittens and scarfs were usually knit by the good mothers and grandmothers.

In almost every village and town there was one tailor shop or more, in which two or more tailors were employed in making garments for the people.

There was also the itinerant tailoress who would go among the families and make their garments. Sometimes she would stay several days in one family. The children were always pleased to see her come, it meant a new suit for them. The local tailoress was very highly respected in the community and was looked upon as a public benefactress.

Almost every village had one or more shoe shops where two or more men were employed in making and repairing shoes and boots. Shoe shops were great loafing places as they were kept warm. While the shoemaker was busy on the bench, the loafers told stories and smoked. At times the air was so heavily charged with the smoke of the pipe and the scent of the water soaked leather, that it was stifling to a sensitive nature.

There was also the itinerant shoemaker who went from house to house and made and repaired shoes for the families. Sometimes he stayed one or

two weeks with a family. He carried with him a kit of tools. The head of the family usually provided the leather in advance of his coming. Sometimes the hide of a favorite heifer or cow was tanned and manufactured into shoes for the family.

In those days the carpenter, the mason, the shoemaker, the tailor and other mechanics worked from sun rise to sun set. There was no such thing as an eight or ten hour system. A pioneer once told the writer that when he began in the woods that something went around his log cabin every morning at four o'clock and said: "Get up or starve, get up or starve." It was the voice of stern necessity.

In those days the wheat was cut with the cradle, and was threshed out with the flail, or with a threshing machine run by horse power. The grass was cut with the English or with the Dutch scythe. The former was sharpened on the grind

stone, and the latter by pounding its edge thinner with a hammer. They were then thoroughly whetted with a whet stone, or a rifle which was a thin wooden stick covered with emery.

Usually several men mowed together in a line, making the strokes at the same time.

The cut grass was then spread, and when dry it was raked into windrows, loaded on the wagon and hauled to the barn or the stack. Here it was pitched off by one or two men. This was hard work on a warm day. The women often helped in the hay fields.

In those days the potatoes were limited to a few varieties as the Long Johns, the Meshannocks, the Carter, the Pink Eye and Early Kidney. These old varieties of potatoes have almost all become extinct, and other varieties have taken their place. The eight row yellow corn and the gourd seed corn were the most common. But what a variety we have now !

Along the streams were located small saw mills, driven by an overshot water wheel. The saw was perpendicular, and moved up and down. Its daily output was small, and when the water was very low, they could not saw.

The grist mills were also located along the streams, and were also run with water power. The power was conveyed to the burrs by wooden cog wheels and shafting.

The burr system was used in grinding grain. This consisted of two large millstones with grooved faces. The one was stationary and the other revolved rapidly on it. The grain was admitted from the hopper, and passed between the millstones and was crushed to powder.

As these mills were few and far from some of the customers, they often brought their grain to the mill and waited until it was ground. The miller usually took his toll from the grain the

customer had brought. From this incident the song took its origin:

O! happy is the miller who lives by himself,
As the wheel goes around he gathers up his wealth:
One hand in the hopper and the other in the bag,
As the wheel goes around, he cries out grab:

This song was used by the young people in connection with their evening party plays.

Sometimes a number of customers would happen to be at the mill at the same time. If the miller and his wife were good natured, they would occasionally extend their hospitality at meal time to their waiting customers. Sometimes the customers from a distance were obliged to wait on their grist for hours, and could not return home until late in the night. This long waiting made these customers social. And many were

the stories told in these old grist mills. The miller's office room became the waiting room, the story telling room, and sometimes the euchre room.

The people were very neighborly. There were bees made to clear the new ground, to pick and haul stone, to cut corn, and to raise a barn or house. But quite often along with these bees went the bottle to stimulate the weary and wasted energies (?).

As very little was known of fire insurance, very few buildings were insured. And when a man was burned out, his neighbors circulated a subscription to assist the man to put up a new building. The people were usually very generous in their aid to the unfortunate neighbor.

CHAPTER V.

TRANSPORTATION, U. S. MAIL AND MONEY, SOCIAL ENJOYMENT AND CRIME

Before the railroad had come into general use, there were a number of canals in operation, All kind of freight was carried in large boats, and passengers and express were carried in the packet, this was a long narrow boat which was well furnished and had plenty of windows for light and ventilation. The horses drawing the packet were usually kept on a slow trot. The speed of the packet caused heavy waves to roll against both sides of the canal. These were considered hard on the canal as they washed its banks considerably. In order to keep up the speed of the packet, there were relays of horses every few miles.

The overland traveling was done principally by the stage coach. With four or six horses this great vehicle was drawn through valleys and over hills. Instead of steel springs, the body of the coach was usually suspended by several plies of heavy leather stretched lengthwise. When going over smooth roads the riding was easy and pleasant, but when going over rough roads the body of the stage filled with passengers bounced like an elastic ball.

As the stage was very compact, the passengers were obliged to sit closely together, and when crowded, the children were held by the older persons. The coach was usually filled inside with passengers and the rack on the rear was filled with baggage which was fastened with straps and ropes. Sometimes even the top of the coach was occupied with a few venturesome passengers who either wanted to have a better view of the country, or did not wish to be too much crowded within.

There is a story told of a stage driver who had three different prices for the same distance, and yet all were admitted into the same coach. His three prices were one dollar, two dollars and three dollars, on one occasion two men who were strangers to the methods of the driver, learning that the prices were from one to three dollars, concluded to pay the one dollar fare. As they traveled along they twitted those passengers who had paid two and three dollars, saying they had paid only one dollar and had the same accomodations. At last they came to a long hill. The coach was stopped and the driver said, "All two dollar passengers get out and walk." When they got out the driver said, "All one dollar passengers get out and push." He then said, "All three dollar passengers can keep their seats."

People traveled much on horseback, both men and women. The big heavy truck wagon was also often used to con-

vey the family to town on Saturday afternoon, or to church on Sunday. Those who could not afford to travel by public conveyance, or had no private conveyance, traveled on foot. It was considered no great task to walk six or eight miles in those days.

The United States Mail was usually carried by the stage, and the stage driver was considered a public functionary. The man who had learned thoroughly the profession of stage driver, and was pleasant and agreeable to the passengers, was treated with some consideration. When the stage route was long there was a relay of horses at convenient places.

The Post Offices in the country were few and far between. Postage on letters was five cents, and usually the receiver of a letter was obliged to pay the postage. Later on the postage on letters was three; now it is two cents. Usually

in the country they had only one or two mails a week.

In those early days much of the money was different from that which is now in use. The cent was a large round copper piece. The English fippennybit and shilling were very common. The bills in circulation were usually on local banks.

The social enjoyments in winter were many. During the season of good sleighing, the farmer hitched his horses encircled with strings of bells, to a large sled, and then gathered several families for a sleigh-ride. A happier and merrier set of people could not be found. He drove from five to ten miles to the home of some friend. Here they spent the day or night in a most social and happy way. The music of the sleigh bells could be heard on a still winter night in almost every direction for miles around.

In those days several companies of militia would meet in a battalion to practice. Battalion Day was considered

a local holiday and the occasion was attended by great crowds. It was interesting to see the militia drill. At such gatherings refreshments were served. For a few pennies one could get a glass of small beer and a large piece of gingerbread. This often constituted the dinner of many a young man and his sweetheart on Battalion Day.

The method of suicide was not by taking gas or some deadly poison, or by shooting oneself, but it was usually by hanging or drowning. The person bent on committing this rash act, would take a rope and go to the garret of his house, or to the barn or some near woods and hang himself, or he would go to the creek or river, and drown himself.

In those days the murderer did not often escape the penalty of the law. He did not atone for his crime by imprisonment for life, or die by an electric shock, but he was hanged by the neck until

dead. Sometimes the execution was public that all might take warning. Thus at Easton years ago a woman was hung on the top of a high knoll within the town that all might see the execution. These were pioneer days when justice took its untrammeled course.

CHAPTER VI.

POLITICAL SCENES

The aged man thinks of the many political changes that took place during his past life. He recalls the time when slavery existed in the Southern States. The Dismal Swamp was the great hiding place of the slaves. The fugitive slaves tried to reach the dominion of Canada where they hoped to be free from their oppressors.

He remembers some of the clashes that took place in congress between the Northern and Southern representatives. A bitter feeling had been engendered between the people of the North and those of the South.

How vividly does he remember the gathering of the war cloud, and the startling declaration on the bulletin board; "War! War! War! The Con-

federates have fired on Fort Sumpter." How vividly does he call to mind the dark days of the Civil War. How slowly did the war seem to draw its weary length through those four years of carnage. It all looms up before him.

The sad news of loved ones killed or wounded in battle, the lamentations of widows and orphans. The bitter feeling that neighbors and relatives cherish toward each other.

How vivid is the recollection of the defeat of the Federal army, the invasion of the North and the battle of Antietem and Gettysburg.

As he thinks over these stirring times in the sixties, his steps seem to quicken to the marching beat of the drum. During that dreadful war what painful suspence was experienced by the people in the North and those in the South. At times it seemed that God had abandoned the nation to its self-destruction. But as the war is now over, the aged

man is reconciled to the Divine Will. Through it, people have learned the lesson that a nation must be chastized for its sins as well as the individual. And that God puifies a nation as with fire. Oh, the miseries of that long Civil War. Perhaps the aged husband and wife furnished a son, or son-in-law for the army. What anxiety was felt for him. In some cases both the son and son-in-law were slain in battle. How sad and shocking the message that announced that some near and dear friend had been slain. He remembers well how the good pastor tried to comfort the bereaved families of his flock when they had lost loved ones in battle; and he recalls the memorial services that were held in the church for those who had fallen in the cause of their country. The pastor tried to show that they had died in a good and righteous cause, and that God would reward them for their noble sacrifice.

Many of the aged men of the present day were soldiers of the Civil War. They are familiarly known as the veterans. How often does their memory revert to the stirring scenes of that war. At night when they lie down and in the morning when they awake, the battle scenes and the camp life loom up in their mind.

When they meet their old comrades, how happy are they. They grasp each other by the hand, and almost overcome with emotion, they exclaim in broken accents, "How are you old comrade!" Sometimes they simply embrace each other with hearts too full for utterance.

Soon after this hearty greeting, they begin the mutual recital of war experiences. Their reunions and camp-fires are occasions of real pleasure and joy to them. They seem to live over their former days of camp life. The ties that bind them together are very strong. Together they have camped, together

they have drilled, together they have marched and together they have fought. They had fellowship in the same hardships, dangers and losses. The tie of sympathy is very strong.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SCHOOL AND THE CHURCH

The rural school house was usually small. The desks ran along the walls. The seats were long benches without support for the back, and the pupils sat facing the wall.

Not only did the little children attend school, but also the young men and women. The number of pupils enrolled in a country school, would sometimes reach as high as sixty. The text books were few and of the simplest kind, and the teacher was not always master of these. The facilities for gaining an educrtion were few and limited.

The schoolmaster was usually a big strong man who would be able to control the big boys and girls, and when necessary apply corporal punishment.

Physical ability was required of a teacher as well as intellectual calibre. It was necessary that the teacher be physically able to control the school.

In those days the spelling matches were very common. It was customary also to lock the school master out of his school the last day, and compel him to treat the scholars before allowing him to enter the school house. A teacher sometimes anticipated the lock-out, and came to school the last day prepared with a treat of candy and nuts.

Singing schools also were very common. The music teacher met his class in the evening or on a Saturday afternoon. The exercises were very much enjoyed by all present. The singing of the scale and a few favorite tunes became familiar to all. All voices were pressed into service and every one felt that his voice counted for much. The teacher knew what familiar and inspiring hymns to sing, and what difficult

pieces to avoid. They usually sang without an instrument, and a good strong voice was much envied.

These singing schools afforded much pleasure to the community. All had great respect for the music teacher, and he was invited to share the hospitality of different families. No wonder the aged grandfather and grandmother smile as they think of those happy days. For a moment they forget that they are aged, and seem to be living in the past, and hum the tunes they so joyfully sang in the bygone days.

In an early day the church was usually located on a hill, especially was this the case in rural districts. This elevation for a church may have been suggested by Mount Zion on which the temple was erected. "The church on the hill," was a familiar expression.

Usually there was a gallery in the rear of the church for the choir, and in many churches there were galleries also on

both sides; these very much increased the sitting capacity of the church.

The pulpit was usually elevated and in some churches resembled a wine glass; hence the expression, "Wine Glass Pulpit." In some churches there was a sounding board above the pulpit, this was to give distinctness and effectiveness to the peachers voice.

In those days the people seemed very devout and eagerly listened to the preaching of God's Word. In many churches the services alternated between English German preaching. The singing was mostly congregational, and was not accompanied with the organ. The tunes were limited in number and were familiar to the audience. The singing was led either by a choir, or by a man who by aid of the tuning-fork caught the right pitch, and then led the congregation in singing. This functionary was called the "tune-raiser." His services were in demand at funerals and religious and social gatherings.

In the early days when hymn books were scarce in the congregation, the minister would line the hymns, that is, he would read aloud two lines and the congregation would sing them, then he would read two more lines, and these were sung in like manner. Thus he lined the whole hymn until it was sung. This would be a very slow method of singing church hymns in our fast age.

In the rural districts, the school house was often used for religious meetings. This was usually crowded to the doors and walls, and many a spirited revival took place during the protracted meetings in the winter season.

Many and dear were the associations of those early days of church going. But where now are many of those who in early life worshiped with the aged of today? They are no more. The aged love to visit the old grave yard near the church, for there slumbers many with whom he associated and worshiped in

God's holy temple. Oh, with what reverence does he tread the walks in the city of the dead!

The funerals in that day were somewhat different from those of the present day. The coffin was not like the modern casket. It was made of cherry or walnut wood with beveled top and lids and the whole was varnished which was quite perceptible to the nasal organs.

The coffin was usually placed on the bier and was carried from the house to the church or grave yard. Often a corpse was thus carried half a mile by four or eight men who wore black cotton gloves. A plain hearse was used in the cities and for long distances in the country.

The hallowed associations of the church of his childhood he readily recalls. He remembers the good pastor who was grave and serious in his looks and manners, sincere and earnest in reading the Bible and in prayer and persuasive in

his discourse. He remembers too the good old hymns they sang in worship. All these things made a lasting impression on him.

He, too, recalls his early conflicts with sin and satan, and the deep convictions produced on his heart by God's Word and Spirit. He recalls the gradual development of his faith, and the time when he made a public profession of his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. To look back upon his early religious experience is like living those days over again.

He recalls many who in those days of religious privileges took a stand on the Lord's side. Most of these were faithful unto death and have already entered into their promised rest and reward. A few were not faithful and fell back into the world. While a few refused to take a stand on the Lord's side, and remained out of the church, and thus deprived themselves of its many blessing and the hope of everlasting life.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MEMORY OF THE PAST IS ATTENDED WITH JOY AND SORROW

As the aged man sits quietly in his arm chair the incidents of the past come up in his mind. At one time a smile comes over his face. He is thinking of some pleasant incident of the past. At another time he seems to be sad, he is undoubtedly thinking of some sad incident, it may have been an accident that befel a neighbor, a fire that destroyed a dear home, a deluge that destroyed crops and swept away bridges, or the ravages of an epidemic in the neighborhood. All these local incidents of his early days come up in his mind.

He also recollects many of his past sins and short comings. This is a source of grief to him. He thus at times keenly

feels the sins of his youth, and hopes that God in his great mercy has forgiven them.

Thus the memory of a long life passes through his mind. He lives over the past with its joys and sorrows, trials and trifles, victories and defeats.

It is a blessing that we have a memory that calls up the past. What a source of pleasure or displeasure is there in the reflection upon the past. That which was good is an occasion of joy and thanksgiving; while that which was evil is an occasion of sorrow and humility. Like heat and cold, light and darkness, they conspire to mature the character of man.

That the memory of the past may be a source of comfort and happiness, how important it is that the youth and middle aged, live good lives and do what is right, so that they will have no painful regrets in old age.

If the aged are reconciled to God, the memory of the past will be pleasant; otherwise it will be unpleasant. The past like a panorama passes before the mind. The scenes of his early childhood, youthhood and middle life, seem to loom up before the mind of the aged man. Much of his past life is an occasion of pleasure and joy, and for much he may feel sorry.

Oh, what food for reflection is the memory of the past. How often does the aged commune with it, and in his imagination transports himself back to youthhood and middle age.

Through the memory, he calls up the past, and is thankful for its blessings, and sorrowful, penitent and humble for its mistakes and follies.

He thereby learns the value of God's mercy and goodness in sparing his life, and in exercising forbearance toward him. Well may he exclaim, "Bless the

Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benfits," *Ps. 103:2,*

His heart is saddened as his recalls the many who have been removed by death. Well may he exclaim, "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness." *Ps. 88:18.*

Like a cow that gathers a store of food during the day, and in the evening lies down and chews its cud, so man during the forepart of his life gathers a vast amount of experience and in the evening of his life, sits down and recalls to mind the incidents and experiences of his past life.

It is true the early days were attended with much inconvenience and many hardships, but even these were conducive to the development of a sturdy manhood and womanhood. It is not the sheltered tree in a rich soil that produces the richly grained wood, but it is the tree on the bleak ridge that is ex-

posed to the storms of Nature. The wild forces that beat upon it, develop in it the veins and gnarls that are so highly prized. And so it is not when we are growing up in luxurious ease and comfort that we produce the gifts and graces which enrich and ennoble the christian life, but it is in the furnace of affliction and trial that Christian character is developed.

Young people speak of remembering certain things in the past, but what is their memory compared to that of their fathers. The aged father looks back on three or four times the length of time over which his children cast their eyes. He has more to remember. How many joys he can remember. How many times has his house been gladdened with plenty. How many harvest homes has he seen. How many times have his children shouted in his ears and rejoiced around him. How many sweet communions has he had with God. How many hallowed

services has he attended. How many songs of Zion has he sung. And how many answered prayers have gladdened his spirit.

When he looks back, he can string his mercies together by the thousands. And looking upon them his heart is filled with gratitude and he can truthfully say, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.,, *Ps. 23:6.* God has been with him to hoary hairs, and even to old age has he carried him.

How many griefs and sorrows too can the aged remember. How many times has he been to the chamber of sickness. How many times has the aged mother been confined to the bed of affliction. How many diseases can they look back upon. How many hours of trouble, infirmty and approaches to the grave can they recall. How many times has the old man tottered very near that "bourne from which no traveler ere returns." How many times has his Heavenly

Father's rod been laid upon his shoulders. And yet looking back he can exclaim, " Even to old age he is the same, and even to hoary hairs has he carried me."

How often has the aged man gone to the grave where he has buried loved ones. Perhaps he has laid to rest a wife and has gone there to weep; or perhaps, the husband sleeps while the wife survives and she goes thus to shed the widow's tears.

The old man can remember sons and daughters snatched away almost as soon as born; or perhaps, to live until their prime and then cut down in their youthhood.

How many too of those old friends whom he welcomed to his fireside, has he buried.

The aged saint can remember times of great temptations. How many conflicts has he had with doubts and fears.

How many wrestlings with the emeny. How often has he been tempted to forsake his faith. In mercy he has been preserved and enabled to pursue in the heavenly way even to old age.

The reflection of the aged saint is sometimes saddened by the recollection of his past sins. At times he is constrained to say, Oh, how I have sinned in my youth, in my middle age and when the infirmities of old age came upon me! How often have I forsaken God, and wandered from him! How often have I doubted his promises when I had no cause to distrust him! Conscious of his unworthiness he says:

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to the cross I cling."

We are apt to forget our faults. An honest man will not forget the debts he owes to his neighbor. But how few remember their debts to God. You may remember your faults with godly sorrow, but do not despair. Look for mercy to

the Lord Jesus Christ. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." *1 John 1 : 9.*

The Aged Live in the Present
Part Second

CHAPTER IX.

THE AGED SEE MANY LOCAL CHANGES.

Like Rip Van Rinkle he wakes from his dreams of the Past, and looks around in amazement at the present scenes. Time has launched him into a new world. How different is it now from what it was seventy years ago.

How different are the garments of the people. They have discarded the homespun garments and wear cloth made of the finest quality of cotton, wool and silk. The shoes if not as serviceable as the handmade of former years, are more tidy and stylish. The furniture in the house is more convenient, and makes the room look more cheerful. The ingrain and Brussels carpets take the place of the old rag carpet, or perhaps the bare floor. The range with

the water tank attached takes the place of the old Hathaway stove, or the fire-hearth. The modern maple, oak, walnut, or iron bedstead with springs and mattress, takes the place of the old poplar high bedstead with its bed-cord stretched lengthwise and crosswise and its straw tick. And the modern beautiful light spreads and blankets are used instead of the heavy comfortable and feather tick.

Then the home was warmed by the fire on the hearth, or by a wood stove, now it is warmed by ornamental stoves, hot air, hot water, or by steam.

In those days the walls of the rooms were whitewashed, which was considered healthy, now they are usually covered with paper of beautiful design.

Then the muzzle-loading shotgun and rifle with a primer and flint lock were used, now the breech-loading shotgun and rifle with cartridges are used. The

old powder horn and shot bag are discarded.

Then the railroads were built principally by the Irishman, now they are built principally by the Italians and Hungarians.

In his early days the weather predictions were based upon the croaking of the tree-frog, the rising or falling of the smoke, the lowing of the cattle, the flight of birds, and the sound of a distant object. Now the weather predictions are based upon scientific principles. From different sections of the country are reported to one central point the temperature and humidity of the atmosphere, the character and velocity of the winds, and the direction of the storms. Upon the data thus reported from different localities, the weather man bases his calculations. He can thus give a pretty good intimation of an approaching storm or calm.

The weather bureau is a great benefit to the farmer, traveler and seamen. It gives them the advantage of knowing what the weather will most likely be the next day. In our Dailies the report of the Weather Bureau is given, and in the large towns and cities, weather flags are displayed.

How different too is the farming of today. The plowing on large level farms is done by the sulky plow, the sowing by the drill, the gathering of the hay and wheat crops is done by machinery. The grain is threshed by the steam separator. Even the grinding of wheat is different; it is by the roller process. The old burr-mill is a thing of the past.

What a difference there is now in hunting and fishing. In his early days the aged man could take his gun, and shoot any kind of game, and at any season of the year. But now there is a fixed and limited time to kill different kinds of birds and animals.

Then too he could fish anywhere and with any kind of fishing tackling; but now he can fish only when it is in season, and with only certain kinds of appliances. The law is so strict and so complicated, that one scarcely knows when he dare go fishing; what he dare catch, or how he dare fish.

Many a good meaning man has been arrested by the fish commissioner because he did not know the fish laws, and was found guilty of fishing out of season, or with unlawful bait.

In the early days of our Republic, it was no uncommon thing to have the bottle in the harvest field and at the raising of buildings. Indeed it was thought that the crops could not be cut, or a barn raised without the help of the demijohn. Even a frame church was occasionally raised with the help of the bottle, and in a few instances the bottle was used at a funeral. But how different is it now. The bottle is dispensed

with in the harvest field and at the various helpful bees. The business men in our day realizing the great evil of strong drink not only discard but forbid its use. The crops are taken off easier and buildings are raised easier and with fewer accidents. And one thing is sure, there are fewer fights accasioned by the use of whiskey in connection with the harvesting and barn raising. The bottle now in the harvest field and at barn raisings would be considered out of place.

The aged man sees a great difference in the transmission of news. Seventy years ago the events occuring in our country were reported one, two or three weeks after their occurence. Then we had usually the weekly news papers. The telegraph was in its infancy, and there was no organized press system for furnishing the papers with the news as in our day. The news from the old country was five to eight weeks late.

But how different it is now with our dailies and the Press System of transmitting reports. Whatever happened in this or foreign countries yesterday may be reported in today's Press.

By our system of telegraph, telephone and R. F. D., all our citizens may be immediately in touch with all other people and countries of the world.

It is really surprising that the farmers today can read of the events that transpired all over the world yesterday. What a wonderful revolution has been made in this respect. The present is so different from the past, that it seems almost imaginary to our aged people. The amount of papers taken and read is astonishing. This certainly is an intelligent age. All feel that it is an age of progress.

How changed are the schools. Years ago we had the common public schools, academies, and here and there a college. Now every school district is provided

with a good school house which is well furnished with the most modern desks and appliances. The free schools are now graded so that the children can take advanced studies under competent teachers. The free school system is established throught the States. Our young people have excellent educational advantages. A number of Colleges and Universities are also successfully operated in different states. Any young man or lady, boy or girl, can have a good educational course if he or she is disposed to take it. We frequently hear the aged regret that they did not have the educational advantages in their childhood days that the children of today have.

The present is the age of organization. A few years ago the Odd Fellows, and the Freemasons were the two principle societies outside of the Church, but now we have a long list of societies; Odd Fellows, Freemasons. Grangers,

Labor Unions, American Mechanics, Manufacturers Unions, etc. Sometimes one is led to think that there is too much organization for the good of the people. Even crime seems to be organized, as the Molly Maguires of a score years ago, and the Black Hand of our day.

The old man thus feels that the present is very different from the past, and at times he does not seem to be in sympathy with it.

CHAPTER X.

THE PHYSICAL CHANGE IN HIMSELF.

The aged man not only realizes that the present external world is different from that of his childhood days, but that his own physical being has undergone a great change. Sixty years ago he was a vigorous youth, full of energy, zeal and life. With a glow on his cheek, a restless energy in his soul, with fond hopes and aspirations for manhood and middle age. Then he had a healthy body, a strong nerve and will to do. But how changed is all this now. His steps are tottering, his brow is furrowed, his head heavy, his hand trembling, his sight is dim, his voice husky, his hearing dull and his will indisposed. The tabernacle in which he lives seems to be on the verge of collape and decay.

Solomon has given us a most striking view of the infirmities of old age in *Ecc. 12 : 1-7.*

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:

In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,

And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low;

Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the

way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:

Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

"While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars be not darkened."—They look dim to the old people, on account of the failure of their sight.

"Nor the clouds return after the rain."—After a rain as soon as one cloud passes by another comes. So it is with old people as soon as they are free from one pain or affliction, another comes.

"The keepers of the house tremble."—The head which is the watch-tower,

and the arms and the hands which defend the body tremble.

"The strong men shall bow themselves."—The legs and thighs which support the body and bear its weight, bend and are soon tired.

"And the grinders cease because they are few."—The teeth with which we masticate our food and prepare it for digestion, cease to do their part because they are broken and decayed.

"Those that look out of the windows be darkened."—The eyes wax dim and no longer see with clearness.

"The doors shall be shut in the street."—Old people keep within doors of their homes, and care not to go abroad.

The lips which are the doors of the mouth, are shut in eating because the teeth are gone.

"When the sound of the grinding is low."—The chewing of their food is

noiseless because of their defective teeth."

"He shall rise up at the voice of the bird."—They have no sound sleep as young people have; a little thing disturbs them, even the chirping of a bird.

"All the daughters of music shall be brought low."—Old people grow hard of hearing, and cannot distinguish and produce musical sounds.

"They shall be afraid of that which is high."—They fear to ascend the steps, or climb a ladder to a high place."

"Fears shall be in the way."—They can neither ride nor walk with their usual boldness, but are afraid of everything that lies in their way, lest it should throw them down.

"The almond-tree shall flourish."—The old man's hair is grown white, so that his head looks like an almond-tree in bloom.

"And the grass-hopper shall be a burden."—The old man cannot bear

much, the lightest trouble sets heavily upon him.

"And desire shall fail."—He has little desire for food and pleasure.

"Man goeth to his long home."—All these infirmities and decays of age are harbingers of that solemn removal when the body will descend to the grave where it will slumber and the soul will go to its home in eternity.

"The mourners go about the streets."—Death will be an occasion of sorrow to our friends that love us. Tears are a tribute to the dead.

"The silver cord be loosed."—Then shall the silver cord by which soul and body were wonderfully united, be loosed, the sacred knot untied, and soul and body forced to part.

"Or the golden bowl be broken."—Then shall the bowl which held the principle of life be broken.

"Or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the

cistern."—All those organs that serve for the collecting and distributing of nourishment shall be broken. The heart beats no more, nor does the blood circulate.

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was."—The body was made of earth and shall return to earth.

"And the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."—The soul returns to God who gave it, to give an account of itself.

Thus the eyes fail, the hearing fails, the memory fails, the limbs fail, the whole tabernacle totters and threatens a speedy fall.

The mind, too, frequently becomes feeble and timid, inclined to sorrow and despondency. Under these painful circumstances how needful, how desirable, is the divine assistance. And the aged feel like praying: "O God, be not far from me; O my God, make haste for my help." *Ps. 71 : 12.* "Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me

not when my strength faileth." *Ps. 71:9.*

Concerning the aged sinner it is written: "If a man live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he." *Ecc. 6:3.* A man who has reached an advanced age and is conscious of the fact that he has neglected the golden opportunities of the past, must be miserable. As he thinks of the past, his wicked life presents itself to him. His words, actions and conduct condemn him. Instead of living for the good of others and the glory of God, he has lived a selfish and aimless life. He feels that he has been a blessing to no one and none will rise up to call him blessed.

Not only has he neglected to heed the claims of others, but he has neglected the claims of his own soul. In early youthhood he saw many of his companions and associates attend to the one

thing needful, the claims of the immortal soul. But he has neglected that highest interest of his being. How many invitations to seek Christ has he rejected, how often has he stifled the Holy Spirit, and how many appeals from the sacred desk has he neglected. God has urged him to give his heart to the Saviour by the example of some of his associates, by the striving of the Holy Spirit during a religious revival, by the sickness that came upon his body, and by the afflictions and death that came upon his family. And yet like a stone he has resisted all these means.

If his conscience is not seared as with a hot iron, his thoughts of the past must be galling. His sufferings of the present are without solace, and his prospect of the future is dark and ominous. May he hear the solemn admonition in his trembling body and stupid spirit, saying, "Prepare to meet thy God." *Amos 4:12.*

It is true you have sinned away your day of grace. You are no more worthy to be called a child of God. You have drank from the vial of sin so long. Your conscience seems to be calloused Your past life of sin condemns you. There seems nothing redeeming in your character. But there is hope for you. Though standing on the brink of the grave, and though hearing the sound of despair as it comes from the bottomless pit. Though calloused with insensibility, there is hope for you. God's mercy is infinite. He delights not in the death of the sinner. He is waiting to be gracious. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." *Isa. 1:18.*

CHAPTER XI.

OLD AGE IS THE PERIOD OF LONELINESS AND SUFFERING.

The aged man often looks around and finds himself a stranger in the world where he has lived so long. Most of those who were his contemporaries in youth have passed away. Perhaps the members of his family have died, and he remains like a solitary oak in the wilderness.

It is seldom that the aged meet with the respect and veneration to which they are entitled. Their habits are considered by the young as peculiar, and their language as the antiquated speech of the past generation. Often their own children are cold, careless and unkind to them. And they are frequently doomed to feel that they are a burden to all around them.

Many an aged christian may say with the Psalmist, "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness." *Ps. 88:18.*

The companions of his youth are dead, or have moved elsewhere, the delight of his eyes has gone to the grave, the dear children who promised to be the staff of his old age are no more, or what is worse they shun his company and treat him with coldness, perhaps with contempt. And those who called themselves his friends in the day of prosperity are now ungrateful and unkind.

When your husband or wife, your son or daughter, or friends forsake you, let your prayer be, "Hide not thy face far from me; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation." *Ps. 27:9.* The promises are, "The Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance." *Ps. 94:14.* "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." *Heb. 13:5.* You may boldly say, "The

Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." *Heb. 13:6.* What wonderful promises has God made for the comfort of all his people. But there is still another and stronger promise. "And even to your old age, I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you." *Isa. 46:4.*

Old age is often the period of suffering and adversity. It is not only the period of natural weakness, but also of disease and pain. We seldom meet with a man entirely free from all diseases. How much less is it to be expected in old age. Even if health continues, yet the system weakens, and the parts become impaired.

When thick and heavy clouds obscure the cheerful light of the sun by day, and of the moon and stars by night, people sometimes complain of the dullness of of the weather. In old people the afflictions of the body and the troubles of the mind often produce gloom. The

days are dull, the nights are wearisome; and they experience little of that pleassure which the young generally enjoy. The clouds return after the rain. One pain and affliction succeed another, as the clouds do in a rainy season.

In cloudy weather the clouds sometimes disperse and the sun shines; but soon the sky is overcast again, and heavy showers descend. So in old age, painful diseases sometimes abate, and the hope of recovery returns, but the interval is short, the pains are renewed and the clouds return.

The aged are subject to the failure of mind as well as of the body. There are instances of aged people retaining the vigor of their mind to a great age. But with the majority of old people, the mind becomes impaired, especially the memory. They do not remember what was done yesterday, although they can remember what was done fifty or sixty years ago. They forget much which

they wish to remember, but they find that God is just the same, that his goodness does not depend upon their memory.

While the days may come when the aged christain says, "I have no pleasure in them," the time never comes to the aged saint when he says, "I have no pleasure in my God." He feels that even to old age God is still faithful to him.

Afflictions are beneficial. They wean us from the world. "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word." *Ps. 119:67.* "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." *Ps. 119:71.* God thus brings us through fire, and refines us as silver is refined, and tries us as gold is tried. Job said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." *Job 13:15.* "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." *Job 1:21.*

It is said that a walnut tree is more fruitful when bruised.

So afflictions develop the graces of the christian life. Well has the poet said:

> "Then shall I sing, O happy rod
> That brought me nearer my God."

These afflictions "worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." *2 Cor 4:17.*

Most useful articles must undergo a preparation for their usefulness. Man too by divine processes of trial is made meet for heaven. The afflictions of this life are the divine processes. They are appointed of God.

God does not view our affliction from afar off, he is even near as our attending physician. The goldsmith does not cast the gold in the furnace, and leave it there, but carefully watches it and withdraws it from the fire when it is sufficiently purified. The father tries the limbs of his child with enclosed arms, so

the saint is tried. "Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand." *Ps. 37:24.* "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even forever." *Ps. 125:2.*

Affliction is no token of God's displeasure. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." *Heb. 12:6.* All men complain in affliction, but all do not call upon God.

A dear old saint who was very poor, was asked if she never felt like murmuring. She replied, "When I do I just ask the Lord to put me in the easy chair and keep me quiet." Her visitor looked around the poor room in vain for an easy chair and then asked her what she meant. "My easy chair," she said, is *Rom. 8:28.* "And we know that all things work together for good to them

that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

In visiting a pottery you will see a vessel that is blurred and marred. The design is not brought out clearly, because it is not burned enough. May it not be that many of us miss much of the finer possibilities of spiritual attainment because we are not willing to suffer?

The infirmities of age teach us the evil of sin. If sin had not entered this world, these infirmities would not have been known. There would have been no pain or aches, no failure of hearing or sight, no wearisome days, and no sleepless nights, These are the fruits and effects of sin. If man had not sinned, he would not have suffered by age any more than angels do. They have lived many thousand years, and they still enjoy all the vigor of youth. But man lives several years before he attains maturity. His manly vigor lasts but a little while, and then he fades like a leaf, or withers

like a flower. "The wind passeth over it, and it is gone and the place thereof shall know it no more." *Ps. 103 : 16.*

The aged man should reflect upon the evil of sin as the sad cause of all his sufferings. Sin is a disease and our afflictions are the symptoms of it.

CHAPTER XII.

OLD AGE IS THE PERIOD OF SOLICITUDE

An old man has not the same anxiety that the young people have. Young people are concerned about starting in business, in supporting their young families and in establishing their children in some useful trade or profession.

But the solicitude of the aged man lies in a different direction. He is more concerned about his body than he was at one time. It begins to totter, shake and quiver. He cannot now run as he did formerly. He feels that the earthly house of his tabernacle is dissolving. He even now and then feels that the pitcher will soon be broken at the fountain.

The chief solicitude of the aged is death. Young men may die, but old

men must die. He feels that at best his days are few on earth.

The thought of life is solemn because it is connected with great responsibilities. God has entrusted us with talent, and we must render an account of our stewardship. We are responsible to God for the many mercies he has bestowed upon us; the privileges given us, and the opportunities he has presented to us.

It matters not how many years a man has lived; only those years which have been spent in the service of God and man, count as having real value. The poet Baily has truthfully said:

> "We live in deeds, not in years,
> In thoughts, not in breaths,
> In feelings, not in figures on the dial;
> He lives most who thinks most, feels most,
> and acts most."

He fears that if he is wrong now it will be a terrible disappointment to have spent all his life in a profession of relig-

ion which proves insufficient in the end. He feels how solemn a thing the Gospel is. That the world is nothing to him, and that he is nearing the bar of God. But still he feels that God's faithfulness is the same; that if he is nearing death, he is also nearing Heaven.

My aged friend, what will be the destiny of your soul? "In the place where the tree falleth there it shall be." *Ecc. 11:3.* You have seen the gate of death open for many years. One generation after another has passed away. You are a lonely oak that has stood many a storm. But soon you must yield to death and pass through its gate.

Are you prepared to die and meet your God? Do you believe in Christ? As a sinner have you fled to Him for refuge? Has your heart been renewed by grace? Are you a new creature in Christ Jesus? Are you made meet by the spirit of God for the inhabitance of saints in light?

If you have neglected the care of your soul, even at the eleventh hour, you may obtain the salvation you have hitherto slighted and refused. "Seek ye the Lord while he may he found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." *Is. 55 : 6, 7.* May your prayer be, "Cast me not off in the time of old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth." *Ps. 71:9.*

A true and deep conviction of our sins and sinfulness will reconcile us to our crosses. We should not think that God treats us with severity, but sincerely say, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." *Ps. 103 : 10.* He has punished us less than we deserved.

An aged sinner may justly say, "How many are in Hell, who never sinned so

much, nor so long as I have. They are taken and I am left. God has given me time and space for repentance, and my afflictions loudly call me to it. "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins." *Lam. 3 : 39.* Sinners must repent and not repine. We are yet living men, and while there is life there is hope.

In the day of adversity consider. Instead of complaining, let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord. If sin has become bitter to us, if we abhor ourselves on account of it, we shall welcome the cross which is intended to destroy the body of sin; to crucify the old man with the affections and lusts; and make us partakers of God's holy nature. Well may the aged and afflicted penitent say, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him."

Few will deny that they have sinned against their fellow men, against parents,

husband and wife, children and neighbors, but they do not remember their sins against God.

There are times and occasions, which ought to bring our sins to our remembrance, especially the time of old age. Observing the sins of others, we are reminded of our own transgressions.

The aged person will see with heartfelt grief, the sins of his youth acted over again by the rising generation. It is recorded of a holy martyr that when he saw a criminal led to execution, he would say, "There goes John Bradford, had it not been for the grace of God."

Afflictions are often the means of humbling the soul for sin. When God sends some sharp affliction to try us, we may say as the woman of old did to the Prophet, "Art thou come unto me to call my sins to remembrance?" *1 King 17:18.*

The apprehension of approaching death will tend to bring sins to remem-

brance. "Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die." The conscience though dormant before, now awakens, and the most ungodly will resort to religion.

Solemn and awful is the thought of appearing before a holy and just God and entering into the unknown and eternal state, to receive sentence according to what we have done in the body. Even the heathen sailors in the ship with Jonah, when they were threatened with shipwreck and death, "cried every man to his God." *Jonah 1 : 14.*

Let not the great concern of the soul be put off to the last hour. Dying persons have often expressed their inability to prepare for the approaching change. Let every one now call his sins to remembrance and repent in dust and ashes. "Let the wicked forsake his way; and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." *Is. 55 : 7.*

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." *1 J. 1:9.* Happy is the aged penitent who has thus remembered his sins, repented, and obtained pardon.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE AGED CHRISTIAN SHOULD EXERCISE FAITH, PATIENCE AND RESIGNATION

It is written of the righteous, "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing." *Ps. 92 : 14.* The aged christian should bring forth the testimony of his experiences.

Young christians are just trying some of the promises of God. But the aged christian can turn them over one after another and say, "There, I have tried this promise and that promise, and have found every one true."

As they read the promises of God, some are inclined to say, "I hope they are true." But the aged saint says, "I know they are true;" and he gives his experience in testing them. David says, "I love the Lord, because he hath heard

my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. Gracious is the Lord, and righteous: yea, our God is merciful. The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me." *Ps. 116:1-6.* David lived to a good old age, and his testimony is the language of experience.

Old people have not the doubts which young people often have about the doctrines of the Bible. From lack of knowledge and experience young people are apt to doubt, but as they grow older their faith becomes solid and firm. By experience the aged have learned the truthfulness of the promise, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be

tempted above that you are able." *1 Cor. 10:13.*

The aged christian should exercise patience. This is needed at every period of life, but especially in old age. Youth is the season of activity and pleasure; but old age is usually the season of pain and affliction, and then patience becomes more necessary than ever.

It is well known that the numerous pains and troubles of the aged call for the exercise of patience. Corrupt human nature is apt to fret and murmur when afflictions are heavy, numerous and long continued. But the christian will meet this temptation to impatience, by recalling the number of mercies he has enjoyed in youthhood and middle life.

Trial and trouble usually abound more at the close of life than at any other former period, and one great design in sending them is patience. Paul says, "Tribulation worketh patience; And

patience, experience; and experience, hope; And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." *Rom. 5:3-5.*

To the christian afflictions are the tokens of paternal love, intended to purge away the dross of corruption, to wean the heart from the creature, and direct the affections to things above, toward which he is advancing every day. If then he believes that all things work together for good to them that love God, he will be reconciled to the rod that smites, and will bless the hand that chastises.

When patience has done its proper and perfect work, it produces experience, an experience of the power and grace of God in supporting and comforting us under the rod.

How many afflicted persons, instead of exercising christian patience, go to vain and hurtful amusements for help;

and others seek a miserable relief in strong drink, while others, impatient to the utmost degree, put an end to their earthly existence. Sinful impatience is compared in the Bible to the rage of an ox not accustomed to the yoke. *Jer. 31 : 18.*

The aged christian will generally be patient. If truly penitent for his sins, he will be patient and reconciled to the rod of correction. The promises, " As thy days, so shall thy strength be." *Deut. 33 : 25.* God will give him patience to endure all his pains and infinites. He has said, " I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." *Heb. 13 : 5.*

A firm belief in the Providence of God is necessary to our patience and resignation to God's holy will. The great God who made the world, rules and governs it and preserves and governs all his creatures. Nothing can take place without his permission. " Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ? and one of them

shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." *Math. 10 : 29, 30.* This is to teach us that the Providence of God extends to every thing, however little and trifling it may seem to be. God is the Author of our being. It is in Him that we live, move and have our being.

It is He who gives us our daily bread, preserves us in sickness and restores us to health. All our troubles and afflictions are under his control. And if we are his children, He will be our guide unto death, our support when dying and be our portion beyond the grave.

It is a comfort to know that the Christian's journey is under divine direction and care. God illuminates his way, directs his steps, supplies his wants, and chases away his fears. Thus the holy men of old reasoned. When Job lost all his great possessions, and all his ten children in one day, he refers to the

providence of God when he says, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." *Job 1 : 21.*

Many an aged person may number among his afflictions the loss of his property which he once possessed, and which he hoped would have been his support in his old age. But it is lost and gone, and painful poverty has succeeded. Or he may mourn the loss of his beloved wife, or affectionate children. Let him imitate Job, calmly submit to the holy will of God, and bless him who takes away as well as gave. Thus it becomes us to bow to the Sovereign Disposer of all things. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" *Gen. 18 : 25.*

"The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." *Ps. 145 : 17.* "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints." *Rev. 15 : 3.* "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath

not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" *Rom. 9 : 20, 21.* When tempted to murmur or complain, "Be still, and know that I am God." *Ps. 46 : 10.*

CHAPTER XIV.

OLD AGE SHOULD BE A SEASON OF GRATITUDE

The aged christian has occasion to say "Bless the Lord, O my Soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his benefits." *Ps. 103; 1, 2.*

It was the complaint of some persons in ancient times that injuries were written in marble, but benefits were written in sand. The former are never forgotten, the latter never remembered. Ingratitude to man is no uncommon fault, but we are far more prone to forget the benefits we receive from God.

When you was a helpless infant, it was God that supported you, when a young man it was God that protected you, and now when you are old, you trust that God will not forsake you.

Aged people should review their past years and recollect with gratitude the goodness of God to them. Look back to infancy. What a feeble creature is the human infant, more feeble than the young of any animal. Forget not the benefits of God in your early childhood. More than a fourth of the children born into this world, die before they are seven years old. Many are the diseases of childhood which few wholly escape and which prove fatal to a large portion of mankind. Children too by their heedlessness often expose themselves to dangers, and their very amusements are often destructive.

The paths of youth are slippery. The seed of sin which are in our fallen nature, now shoot up in the form of youthful lusts, which war against the soul. Violent are the propensities of our sinful nature. Review your middle life. In the sweat of the face you have eaten your bread. But who gave you strength to labor, and suc-

cess in your business? It was God. If you have become wealthy in your business or profession, boast not of your own wisdom and diligence, but ascribe your success to the bounty of your Heavenly Father.

If poverty has been your painful lot your necessities have been supplied; you have had food and raiment. And perhaps you have had better health and more contentment than many of those in better wordly circumstances.

In the course of a long life, you may have occasion to look back on some remarkable deliverance from danger. If you have been to sea, you may have witnessed many a hard gale, and narrowly escaped a fatal shipwreck. Some of your companions may have perished.

Workmen in some employments are exposed to great dangers. And travellers are exposed to many disasters on land and sea. Preservation from these

is a special benefit to be thankfully recorded and acknowledged.

Are you an old soldier? Think of the many dangers to which you were exposed. How many of your comrades were wounded, and how many killed on the battlefield. How many too have perished from exposure, sickness and disease. But you have been spared.

Few have lived in the world who have not at times been dangerously ill. Perhaps there was a time when some sickness, or disease laid you very low; when there was but a step between you and death. But God spoke the word, the disease was rebuked and your health was restored.

Do you praise the Lord according to his benefits? Do you remember the vows you made in sickness? Recovering from sickness is one of the benefits which we should not forget.

Let your domestic comforts be thankfully remembered. It is God who "set-

teth the solitary in families." *Ps. 68:6.* Our Maker thought it not good for man to be alone. And by the institution of marriage laid the foundation of a thousand comforts. The reader has perhaps sustained the relation of a husband, wife, brother or sister. And from these tender relations has received for many years a rich variety and succession of his chief delights. They have been the source of his principle happiness through life. Some of the dear relatives have gone to the grave, but you have not forgotten their kindness. Oh, forget not to praise that God from whom all this kindness flows.

Plato, the pagan philosopher, thanked God that he was made a man, and not a beast. What a privilege it is not only to be made a human being, but also born in the land of Gospel light and religious liberty. Here you have the word of God which is able to make you wise unto salvation. Here you enjoy the

rich privilege of hearing the Gospel preached. We can truly say, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear." *Math 13 : 16.*

Thrice happy are you if your eyes have been opened that you see the need of the Savior; that you flee to Him for refuge; that you receive Him as your Prophet to teach you; your Priest to atone for you; and your King to reign over you. Yes, blessed are those who find Christ, win Him, and are found in Him. Who hope and trust in Him.

Perhaps you descended from pious parents, and have enjoyed the benefits of a religious home and education. May your godly parents meet their posterity in glory and be able to say: "Here are we and the children which thou gavest us." What a happy meeting that will be. May it be your happy lot to join the redeemed throng in the heavenly world.

Those who have had communion with God in prayer, in his word, in his house and in his ordinances, know how to appreciate these privileges.

CHAPTER XV.

SPECIAL DUTIES ENJOINED UPON THE AGED

Aged people should not be self-conceited as too many are, and think they do not need instruction; but they should be glad to learn what are their special duties which God requires of them.

The aged should be sober-minded, sedate and vigilant. Our Savior urged watchfulness upon all his diciples, and this is necessary to the aged.

The decay of nature, the failure of strength, and the various pains and infirmities of advanced life, loudly proclaim the approach of death which cannot be far distant, and may be near at hand, even at the door. Many old people die suddenly. An attack of palsy or apoplexy may come upon the human frame at any time, and in a few days,

hours or minutes, life may become extinct. How often have we heard or read of aged people thus suddenly taken ill at the table, or while sitting in their chair, or while lying on their bed, and suddenly passed away.

This uncertainty of the time when God shall call us hence, was urged by our Lord as an argument to enforce his exhortation to watchfulness. "Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." *Math. 24:42.* "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the son of man cometh." *Math. 24:44.*

As very few opportunities for spiritual improvement may remain, the aged should diligently improve them. He should be watchful against those evils to which he is most prone as covetousness and the love of the world. He should also guard against pride and peevishness, and needless and useless anger.

Gravity or seriousness should characterize the aged. Levity and excessive gayety of temper and talk are censurable in all, but more especially in the aged. Filthiness, foolish talking and jesting are never commendable, but in old people they are odious and distasteful.

An aged minister of state when asked why he was more fond of retirement and more pensive than formerly, replied: "Ah, my friend, while we laugh, all things about us are serious. God is serious who exercises patience toward us; Christ is serious who shed his blood for us; the Holy Spirit is serious who striveth against the obstinacy of our hearts; all that are in Heaven are serious, and all that are in Hell are serious. How then can a man that has one foot in the grave jest and laugh."

Cheerfulness is very desirable and admirable in the aged. The aged christian is often feeble in mind as well as in body.

He is frequently low-spirited, and tempted to fear and despond. He thinks that God takes no notice of his sorrowful condition, or, if he sees it, he does not regard it or interpose for his relief. David thus felt at one time and exclaimed; "Will the Lord cast off forever? and will he be favorable no more? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" *Ps. 77:7,9.* And he checked himself for such sad apprehension and added: "This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High." *Ps. 77:10.* To those fears and doubts of the christian God says: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." *Isa. 49:15.*

True religion and a lively hope of heavenly happiness, will inspire the good man with cheerfulness. It helps

him better to bear his infirmities, and it makes him more pleasing to his family and young friends.

Cheerfulness should not degenerate into folly and lightness. The aged of either sex should not be gay in their apparel, or frequent places of sinful amusements. They should seek retirement, read their Bible, and attend the services of God's house as often as they are able. They should abound in private prayer, and by their conversation and example, recommend their religion to their children, their grandchildren, and all about them.

The aged should be temperate in their eating and drinking. Our mortal bodies must be daily nourished. God has mercifully provided proper articles of food. At first the fruit of the tree was the food of man. Then God granted a variety of herbs, and lastly the flesh of beasts, birds and fish. He has given man the free use of all these, and has endowed

him with an appetite that he many seek his food and enjoy it. Through the depravity of his fallen nature, he is prone to abuse these gifts of God by gluttony and drunkenness. He becomes carnal and minds earthly things. Like the beasts that perish, he lives a life of mere sense, and his inquiries are those of the heathen, "What shall we eat; or, what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?" *Math. 6:31.* In the meantime God is forgotten, religion is disregarded, perhaps despised, and the salvation of the soul is neglected.

Not abounding in love to God and man, but under the power of a carnal mind which is enmity toward God and toward man, he is selfish, covetous, angry and morose. Not patient in affliction, but murmurs at his lot, and unwilling to bear the rod.

This disposition and conduct is dangerous at any period of life, but is dreadful when life is drawing to a close. Then

men should be more dead to the world and its pleasures and more concerned about the next world.

There was a slave whose master died. Somebody said to the simple-hearted old man, "I hope your master has gone to heaven." "I'se afraid he has'nt gone dare," was the reply, "for I never heard him speak of dat. When he go to de North, or de Virginny Springs, he's gettin' ready long time ahead. I never see him gettin' ready for goin' to heaven." There is much truth in this inference of the old slave.

Perhaps the aged may plead that their strength fails, that their spirits sink, and that they need greater support than formerly. But they should be moderate in their eating and drinking.

Too many aged men, and sometimes women too, resort to spirituous liquors. This is lamentable. How often has it occured that death ensued soon after going to a feast, or gratifying the palate

with too great a variety or quantity of meats and drinks. How opportune is the warning: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." *Luke 21:34.* Let the aged be always temperate and very moderate in the indulgence of their appetites.

What a sad picture is an aged man tottering on the verge of the grave, who is not sober and watchful, but is careless and unconcerned about his soul; is not grave and serious, but vain and trifling, light and foolish; not temperate but fond of indulging to excess in his eating and drinking. "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." *Phil. 3:19.*

The sinking and afflicted man may be a backslider. Once he took pleasure in religion, and perhaps prospered in the

world, but a sad reverse has taken place. Conscious of having forsaken God, he is afraid that God has forsaken him forever.

In some cases the aged may perceive that particular sufferings are the effect of particular sins, and he is led to exclaim with Job; "Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth." *Job 13:26.* "His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust." *Job 20:11.*

It is said that Alexander the Great when besieging a certain city, kindled a torch and offered pardon to those of the inhabitants who surrendered while it was blazing, but threatened destruction on all who still held out after the flame was extinguished. So while there is life there is hope for you. God is waiting to be gracious to you. His exhortation is, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation." *2 Cor. 6:2.*

The aged christian should be an example and comfort to young people. Why is the preaching of an aged minister more solemn and impressive than that of a young minister? Because of his age and experience. Hence it is the duty of the aged christian man or woman to bear testimony for Christ, his church and his religion. It is the duty of the aged christian to comfort and cheer the young and inexperienced christian. None are better adapted to this service. They can say, "Be of good cheer. Do not fear. I have gone through the waters and they have not overflowed me, and through the fire, and have not been burned. Put your trust in the Lord who will sustain you in affliction, comfort you in sorrow and be your help in every time of need."

CHAPTER XVI.

HIS COMING TO THE JORDAN

As the Jordan River separated the Wilderness from the Promised Land of Canaan, so death as a river separates this world from the spirit world.

Death is certain. The decree has gone forth. The seed of death has been sown in human nature. One generation after another passes away. This is an event which is daily occurring.

There is no escape from natural death. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." *Heb. 9 :27.* We cannot outlive it or Methuselah who lived 969 years had not died. Piety will not stay it off or Abraham, David and Daniel had not died. Greatness will not ward it off or Cyrus, Alexander and Napoleon had not died. How true the hymn:

"Hark! from the tombs a doleful sound,
My ears attend the cry:
Ye living men come view the ground
Where you must shortly lie,

Princes, this clay must be your bed,
In spite of all your tow'rs;
The tall, the wise, the rev'rend head,
Must lie as low as ours."

There is nothing in the world so certain as death. If you had the wings of the eagle, you cannot escape it, If you had the strength of a lion, you could not resist it. If you had the wealth of Croesus, you could not bribe it. If you had the voice of a nightingale, you could not charm it away. If all your kindred were around you, they could not defend you against it. Death takes the monarch from the throne, the minister from the pulpit, the farmer from the plow, and the mechanic from the work bench. It takes the husband from the wife and the wife from the husband, parents from their children and children from their

parents, brothers from sisters and sisters from brothers, and friend from friend.

Every eye that now sees will soon be sealed in darkness, every ear that now hears will soon be deaf, and every pulse that now beats will soon be stilled. Every one of our homes will soon be the habitation of another. And the place that now knows us will know us no more forever. Yes, we all know that we must die. "Is there not an appointed time to man upon the earth? are not his days also like the days of a hireling?" *Job 7:1* "I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed to all living." *Job 30: 23.* Solomon says, "The living know that they shall die." *Ecc. 9:5.*

Shelly in describing death says:

"First our pleasures die, and then
Our hopes; and then our fears, and when
These are dead, the debt is due,
Dust claims dust, and we die too."

Death is a great secret. We know not when, where or how we will die.

Man knoweth not his time. Some calendars are printed that give for every day two facts: the number of days of the year already gone, and the number of days that are still left of the year. Now in the calendar of our lives we can do only one of these two things, we can number the days that are gone, but we cannot number the days that are still left. God is the only one who can keep a record of the days that are to come. On account of the uncertainty of death this exhortation is given, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." *Math. 24:44.*

Death is a great change. It is the separation of the body and soul. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." *Ecc. 12:7.*

We commit the body to the ground with these solemn words: earth to earth; ashes to ashes; dust to dust. The soul

takes its flight to that country, "from whose bourn no traveler e're returns."

Death is very affecting. It is not only the separation of the soul from the body; but it is the separation of husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, and friends from friends. It makes a vacancy in the home, in society, and in the church.

Death is called the "king of terrors." *Job 18 : 14.* Paul says, "The last emeny that shall be destroyed is death." *1 Cor. 15 : 26.* Most all people fear the monster, and yet all must meet it.

Many are the fears which some pious people experience in prospect of death, and of the pains of dying. How unreasonable are all these misgivings. "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine," *Is. 43 : 1.* David said, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art

with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." *Ps. 23 : 4.*

In ancient times the lion was the synonym of death. To meet a lion was equal to meeting death. To be in the shadow of a lion was to be in the shadow of death. Hence any condition in which we are exposed to imminent danger, is a valley of the shadow of death. The man that is engaged in any dangerous occupation as mining, railroading, or the manufacture of explosives, is passing through this valley. A person who lives in a country where some fatal disease or epidemic is prevailing, is passing through this valley. He who is in a state of any lingering and wasting disease as cancer, consumption, dropsy, or heart disease, is passing through it. And he who is advancing in years, is passing through this valley.

Do you say, "I am timerous and afraid to die?" The less you think of death the more terrible it will appear. Make

yourself familiar with it by frequent meditation and prayer. This will quiet your nerves. "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" *Deut. 32:29.*

That you may have a hopeful death, keep a clear conscience. Paul says, "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." *Acts 24:16.*

Be always watching and waiting for the change. Beware of slumbering or sleeping while the Bridegroom tarries. Live in constant expectation of his coming, and then you can say, "This is my Lord, and I have waited for him."

Wean your heart from the world. Let the mantle of earthly enjoyments hang loosely about you, that it may easily be dropped at death. Walk through the world as a pilgrim and stranger. When the fruit is ripe it falls off the tree

easily. So when christians are weaned from the earth and have their treasures in Heaven, it is easy to die.

Be diligent in gathering and laying up evidences of your title to Heaven. This will support and comfort you at death. The want of this preparation has given rise to doubts and fears to some dying christians.

The prophet Isaiah spoke unto Hezekiah, "Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live." *2 Kings 20:1.* Have you your temporal and spiritual house set in order? As a passenger when on board of a steamer, remembers that he has neglected some necessary business on shore, is very unhappy and uneasy, so the reflection of a dying hour upon neglected seasons and opportunities will produce much unhappiness.

In the hour of death when heart and flesh fail, and the soul is about to be launched into eternity and appear be-

fore God, all the gold and silver in the universe, all the splendor of the imperial court, will not afford one gleam or ray of hope.

If sin is the cause of our days being few and full of trouble, then Christ alone can help us. He can cause mortality to put on immortality. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." *1 Cor. 15:22.*

Aware of the value and danger of the soul, Paul intrusted it, with all its interests for time and eternity to the guardianship of the Lord Jesus Christ. If our souls are in Christ's hands who shall harm them? Who can pluck them out of his hands? They shall be kept from all evil and raised to eternal glory. When Stephen was stoned to death, he called upon God saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." *Acts 7:59.* On the cross, Jesus said; "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." *Luke 23:46.*

Do you rejoice in prospect of a glorious immortality. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death." *Prov. 14:32.* The Lord takes great interest in the death of the righteous. In life he beheld them with complacency and delight, much more so will he in death. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." *Ps. 116:15.*

The certain approach of death is taught by the infirmities of old age. The young may die, the old must die. Death may be near a man at any time, but it must be very near to the old man. He can truthfully say with David, "There is but a step between me and death." *1 Sam. 20:3.* Death is at the door. Do you not hear its knock? Your aching limbs, your failing sight, your trembling hands, all are the signs of the approaching change.

When God says, "Behold I come quickly," our response should be, "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

Death is a departure from the earth without a return. David says, "But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." *2 Sam 12:23.* Job says, "He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him anymore." *Job 7:10.*

Death is an awful and momentous event. It is the crisis on which hangs the everlasting destinies of the soul. Does the state of your life, conscience, and heart, warrant you a safe and happy death?

How different is the death of the wicked from that of the righteous. It is dark, dreary and hopeless. It is the beginning of sorrow, and the prelude to everlasting woe.

Death is twofold, natural and spiritual. Natural death is the separation of soul and body. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." *Ecc. 12 : 7.*

The second death is the separation of the soul from God and is spiritual. The poet says:

"There is a death whose pang
Outlasts the fleeting breath:
Oh! what eternal horrors hang
Around the second death!

Lord God of truth and grace,
Teach us that death to shun:
Lest we be banished from thy face,
And evermore undone."

A poor old infirm man or woman full of pain and aches, tottering on the brink of the grave, and in danger of dropping into Hell, is a shocking spectacle. May God awake such to discover their danger, and cause them instantly to flee for

mercy to Jesus Christ, the only deliverer from the wrath to come.

What a beautiful sight it is to see the aged christian waiting with patience and resignation, all his appointed time for his change from mortality to immortality, from cross-bearing to crown wearing, for his translation from earth to Heaven.

"All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." *Job 14:14.*

Being born of God they are righteous in principle and character. A righteous life is the best evidence of a saint's true character.

While there is no escape from natural death, there is an escape from spiritual death. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" *J. 1:29.* "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." *Rom. 8:1.*

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." *J.* 11*:25.* "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power." *Rev. 20:6.*

The Aged Live in the Future By Faith and Hope

Part Third

CHAPTER XVII.

FAITH IN THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

We have considered how the aged live in the Past by memory, in the Present by experience, and now we will consider how they live in the Future by faith and hope.

Job asks a very important question when he says, " If a man die, shall he live again? *Job 14:14.* It is true the aged christian realizes that his physical being is breaking down, but this does not discourage him. With assurance he can say, "For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." *2 Cor. 5:1.* In prospect of death the aged saint can say, " I know whom I have believed, and am persuad-

ed that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. *2 Tim. 1:12.* Like Solomon, the aged have learned that this world is vanity of vanities. He thinks of his Heavenly Home as his real good.

That the human spirit lives after the death of the body, is a wholesome doctrine and full of comfort. Its immortality may be inferred from its great value. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" *Math. 16:26.*

The immortality of the soul is clearly taught in such passages as these: "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." *Luke 23:43.* "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." *Math. 22:32.* It is clearly taught in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man. *Luke*

16 : 19-31. Paul says, "We are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." *2 Cor. 5 : 8.*

The christian lives trusting in an unseen Savior, and ventures by the same faith into an unseen world. Jesus brought life and immortality to light in the Gospel, and clearly reveals the future eternal state.

But we are only partially acquainted with the nature of the unseen world. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." *1 J. 3 : 2.* It is our happiness to know that the Lord Jesus has dominion over the world of spirits.

The future world to us at present is the invisible world. It is so represented to us in the old and the New Testament. But Heaven ought not to be to us a vague shadowy land, no more real than

the fairy land, as compared with this life. It is this world that is fleeting and uncertain; heaven is the abiding reality, the city that hath foundation.

Our destiny is an eternal one. That idea is wrapped up in our nature, as surely as the oak is wrapped up in the acorn, as the eagle is in the egg. We walk on feet, but are destined to fly with wings. The hope of an eternal destiny is to us what the ballast is to a ship, it steadies us in time of storm.

God is preparing heavenly mansions for our souls, and at the same time, He is preparing our souls for these heavenly mansions. In both of these worlds, He is all the time showing his love for us. He wants to make every one of our days a preparation for Heaven.

It is written, "Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people." *Gen. 25:8.* "And Isaac gave up the ghost, and

died, and was gathered unto his people." *Gen. 38:29.* "And Jacob yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people." *Gen. 49:33.* The thought of dying and being gathered to his people is not only pleasant to the aged, but also implies the immortality of the soul.

It is natural to shrink from death, but christianity places us above the natural. The river of death as Bunyan beautifully expresses it, is deeper or shallower according as we believe in God, and our faith can make the river seem to us almost dry land, and only a shaded path with home at the end of it.

A small boy who sat quietly and patiently in a railroad car on a hot and dusty day, was asked if he were not tired of the long ride, and of the dust and heat. With a smile he replied, "Yes, a little, but I don't mind it much because my father is going to meet me when I get to the end of it." It is the faith that Jesus will meet us on the other side of

Jordan, that cheers us in our wearisome pilgrimage on earth. One of the saddest sights is the coming of an emigrant to a strange country with no one to meet or welcome him. But Christ has told us that he has prepared a place for us in the country to which we are going, and that he will be there to give us a welcome.

Stephen was a witness to the immortality of the soul. His chief concern at death was about it. His prayer was, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." *Acts 7:59.* "He feared not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." *Math. 10:28.*

The natural tendency of the human mind is to live by sight, and not by faith. But the believer sees something beyond this world. He confesses that he is a stranger and pilgrim on the earth as were his fathers. The present world is not, and cannot be the rest of a good man. It is not suitable to his position,

it cannot answer his expectation or fill his hopes. David longed to fly away and be at rest. Job said, "I would not live alway." *Job 7:16.* "Paul had a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." *Phil. 1:23.*

The afflictions of this life prove that this world is not our rest. This world is the scene of crosses and disappointments. Our bereavements declare that this is not our home. Rachel is still weeping for her children. David is still lamenting over Absalom. Sisters are still mourning for a Lazarus. Our parents, our partners, our children, and our departed friends, where are they? Lest we should build below the skies, they beckon us onward and upward, and remind us that this is not our home.

Even the most joyous scenes of earth declare that this is not our rest. Those who have all that heart can wish, or soul enjoy; those who are great, healthy and rich, are not necessarily happy.

The spirit cannot be satisfied with earthly good. It soars upward and presses forward, and nothing short of Heaven will satisfy it. Hence we are exhorted, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." *Col. 3:2.* Christ prayed, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." *John 17:24.*

Christ has thus revealed a New Heaven and a New Earth. It is exhibited in his Word, promised in the Gospel, and offered to all who love and serve him. The promise is, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." *Heb 4:9.* Just before his departure from earth, Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you: I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am ye may be also." *J. 14:2,3.*

The soul and body are the essential parts of a man. From their beginning to the grave, they run the same race, and should enjoy the same reward. Should the soul enjoy everlasting happiness, and the body be lost in everlasting forgetfulness? Should the one be glorified in Heaven, and the other remain in dust? No, No, instinctively we say, "I believe in the resurrection of the body." The resurrection of the body is proven by Christ's resurrection. "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." *1 Cor. 15:13,14.* "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." *1 Cor. 15: 20, 21.*

Death is necessary to the resurrection. "That which thou sawest is not quick-

ened, except it die." *1 Cor. 15:36.* "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice. And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." *J. 5:28,29.*

Christ has changed both the nature and name of death. It is now called a sleep, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." *J. 11:11.* In like manner all those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. The sting of death is sin. It was by sin that death entered into the world. But Christ, the second Adam, brought in life and immortality. "If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by the spirit that dwelleth in you. *Rom. 8:11.*

By faith Noah saw the unseen flood 100 years before it occurred. *Heb. 11:7.* By faith Abraham foresaw the coming of

Christ long before it occurred. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it. and was glad." *J. 8:56.* Referring to the Patriarchs, Paul says, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." *Heb. 11:13.* So by faith we see the fulfillment of God's promises. As christians we should feel assured of the immortality of our souls, and of that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. This assurance should wean the mind from the love of the world.

We shall live not only in the future, but also in another world, quite different from the present one. The christian feels that he is a stranger in this world. "He sets his affections on things above, not on the earth." *Col. 3:2.* As a traveler his heart is fixed on the heav-

enly home, as a mariner he is destined to the heavenly abode.

"The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." *2 Cor. 4:18.* If a thing is not seen, it does not follow that it does not exist. Air, gas and life are invisible. So it is with eternal things. We cannot see them, but we are persuaded that they do exist. Thus we believe in the soul, God, the Savior, Holy Spirit, Heaven and Hell.

We see these invisible things by faith. Thus we accept the fact that there are such places as London, Paris and Rome. That there were such persons as Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon and Washington. What the eye is to the body in the material world, faith is to the soul in the spiritual world. By it we become conscious of spiritual and eternal things.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OUR VISION AND FORETASTE OF HEAVEN

Moses the leader and lawgiver of Israel was permitted to ascend Mount Pisgah and from its lofty summit view the Promised Land of Canaan as it lay beyond the Jordan River. "And Moses went up to the top of Pisgah; and the Lord showed him all the Land." *Deut. 34:1.* A number of inspiring hymns have been composed and sung to commemorate this event.

Death like the river Jordan separates us from the Heavenly land; and from the Scripture viewpoint we are permitted by faith to look across the river of death and view the Heavenly Land. From childhood we have loved to sing the hymn :

"There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign;
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.

There everlasting spring abides,
And never withering flow'rs;
Death, like a narrow sea, divides
This heav'nly land from ours.

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand dressed in living green!
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between.

Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream, nor deaths cold flood
Should fright us from the shore."

Canaan and the land of Beulah were typical of the Heavenly Land. Jerusalem was typical of the New Jerusalem above. Paul had a vision of it when he was "caught up to the third heaven." *2 Cor. 12:2.* From the Isle of Patmos John had a good view of the Heavenly

Land and has given us an extensive discription of it in the Book of Revelation.

In the Bible, Heaven is spoken of as the Habitation of God, the Father's House, the New Jerusalem, the City of David, and Paradise.

It is natural to wonder where Heaven is, what it is like, what is the occupation of its inhabitants, and who shall be our associates there.

It is located somewhere in God's universe. It is referred to as being upward, away from the earth. Christ ascended up to it. Paul was caught up to the third heaven. In this heavenly place God has his palace, his great white throne, his servants and his celestial temple.

Scripture represents it as a state of rest from wearisome toil, of triumph after warfare, of glory after suffering, and of life after death. Heaven is a state of immortality and infinite bliss.

In Revelation we have a beautiful description of the Heavenly Canaan; of its fertile garden, its River of Life, the pearly gates, its unsetting sun, its King, and its inhabitants. John saw a great multitude which no man could number. Heaven is a densely populated city.

When the sky is covered with clouds, occasionally they part for a moment, and we get a glimpse of the sky, and perhaps see the sun, moon, or stars. So the clouds of darkness that intervene this and the next world seem to part for a moment, and we get a glimpse of the spirit world. Such are special seasons of revelation and inspiration. Thus Stephen just before he was cruelly put to death, "being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." *Acts. 7: 55.* Thus too the veil was parted for Paul when "he was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words,

which it is not lawful for a man to utter." *2 Cor. 12 : 4.* This also occurred on the Mount of Transfiguration. "He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering. And behold, there stood with him two men, which were Moses and Elias; Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." *Luke 9 : 28-30.* Thus after living fifteen centuries in Heaven, Moses visits the earth and was seen by Jesus and three of his disciples.

In the parable of Lazarus and the richman, Jesus draws the veil aside and gives us a glimpse of Heaven and Hell. At the open tomb of our Lord we get a glimpse of an angelic being. "The angel of the Lord, came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning and

his raiment white as snow." *Math. 28: 2, 3.* White is the color of Heaven.

Angels have often been seen on earth, and have frequently appeared to men. Many a dying saint has exclaimed. "Don't you see the angels. The air is full of them." A dying elder of the Heidelberg Reformed church, Philadelphia, exclaimed: "I see many angels. I see thousands of beings waiting for me." Why should not angels linger at the bedside of a Christian who is about to join their company forever. Our Savior declared that "the beggar Lazarus died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." *Luke 16: 22.*

A young Scotch woman visiting in New York, was smitten with a fatal illness. She said. "Take me home for I must see the hills of Scotland before I die." In mid-ocean she became worse and they took her on deck. The west was aglow with the setting sun, but its glory she did not see. Suddenly she

said, "I see now the bonnie hills of Scotland. They are full of chariots and horses. They are coming nearer." Then she closed her eyes for the last time. As she in mid-ocean at the close of her life had a vision of the "bonnie hills" of her native land, so many a saint at the close of his life has had a vision of the heavenly land.

Canaan was a type of heaven. There is the Tree of Life, and the River of Life. It is a land of freedom after the slavery in Egypt. A land of triumph after warfare in the wilderness. A land of rest after the trials of the desert. How cheering is the prospect of Heaven to the poor, the slave, the warrior, the pilgrim, and to every christian.

It is a Jewish tradition that Joseph when he had gathered grain in Egypt, threw the chaff into the Nile so that the river might bear it to the neighboring cities and distant countries below, and thus indicate to them where there was

an abundance of grain, So God also has sent to us upon this earth slight hints of the joys he has laid up for us in Heaven. Earth is his footstool. If there is such glory to be seen on earth what will it be in Heaven.

Faith is given us to see the promises afar off. Hope is given us to expect a celestial city. Heaven is the counterpart of that void of the heart which we feel in this world. To the friendless and persecuted it is a place of sympathy and love. To the stranger and outcast, a home; to the troubled and anxious, peace; to the laborer and toiler, rest. There will be there no hunger, thirst, weariness, cold or pain.

When a blind boy whose eyes were operated upon, had the bandages removed and was able to see, he saw his mother, but he did not know her. Then she said, "My son, can you see?" He sprang into her arms exclaiming, "O mother! is this Heaven?" That is the

best definition of Heaven. It is seeing eye to eye, and knowing even as we are known. If such joy is experienced in recognizing a dear one in this world, what must be the joy experienced in heaven when we shall meet loved ones who have been separated from us by death many years.

Worldly men walk by sight. Their minds are absorbed with the affairs of this world. They seek satisfaction in only that which is visible as money, property, reputation and pleasure. They are not susceptible to heavenly visions and felicities. But the christian who walks not by sight but by faith, walks in the light of Gods countenance. He has companionship with God. Thus Enoch walked with God. He had a foretaste of that fellowship that awaits God's people in Heaven.

As christian pilgrims may we manifest the joys of our christian experience. Our joyful attitude will recommend our

Savior and religion to others. May our song ever be:

"Children of the heavenly King,
As ye journey, sweetly sing;
Sing your Savior's worthy praise,
Glorious in his works and ways.

Lift your eyes, ye sons of Light!
Zion's city is in sight:
There our endless home shall be,
There our Lord we soon shall see."

CHAPTER XIX.

LONGINGS FOR THE HEAVENLY HOME

Paul in his Epistle to the Colossians says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth." *Col. 3:1,2.*

There are many reasons for a christian longing for Heaven. He prefers perfect light to the comparative darkness of this world. Here in this state he sees through a glass darkly. How little does he know of the plans of God. In this life he is confounded by the occurrence of events which he is unable to understand. How delightful will be the contrast when he reaches Heaven. Then many a dark page in the history of God's dispensation on earth will be illuminated

by a clear and satisfactory light. Then he will know why he had anguish when he longed for rest. Why his plans were frustrated, his bright hopes blasted, and his choicest blessings taken from him.

Then the mysteries of redemption will unfold to his delighted eye. Then the great and holy truths which he knew so imperfectly will burst upon him in their full brightness.

Then there will be no uncertainty, no confusion, and no darkness. This seeing through a glass darkly belongs to earth. But seeing face to face belongs to Heaven. There the vision will be perfect. And the sun of that moral universe will shine with immortal splendor.

It is natural that the christian should look with grateful expectation toward Heaven as the only region of perfect purity. At the gate of that world, the christian lays aside all that is earthly, and puts on the robes of perpetual holi-

ness. There, every heart beats, every faculty is active, and every harp is strung.

The christian longs to be delivered from his wondering thoughts, from these cold expressions of devotion, and from these feeble efforts in doing the will of God. He would converse only with holy beings, and would be engaged only in holy exercises.

The human mind has been able to grasp only a few problems of Nature. It has gathered only a few pebbles on the shore of a great ocean of truth. At the threshold of Heaven he will drop this mortal and put on an immortal body. The body will then shine with an angel's beauty, and the mind with angel's strength. The mind will brighten and expand. The moral nature will sin no more. "For this corruption will put on incorruption."

In Heaven there will be uninterrupted and eternal tranquility. The chris-

tian looks forward to it as a sanctuary, a refuge which no storm that may rise on the Earth or in Hell, can reach.

In Heaven there is no dying scene to break the heart, no party spirit, no rivalry and no unhallowed strife.

The glorified never feel the blighting hand of disease, or the blasting breath of slander, or the mildew of an envious and malignant spirit.

Why should not the christian wish to breathe that peaceful atmosphere. He longs for Heaven because the fellowship of the glorified he prefers to the society of the imperfect. There, all will be bound together in the cords of love. All minister to the joys of one another.

All the ransomed out of every nation and kingdom and tongue and people will be there. Every patriarch, every prophet, apostle, martyr, and saint of every age, climate and condition will be there.

There too will be the native inhabitants of Heaven, who have always been loyal to the King, and who will continue at home in the fields of immortality. Jesus the dying Lamb, the Hope of the World, will be there carrying on his mediatorial reign.

This vast assembly will constitute one glorious fraternity. Is it any wonder that the christian should desire to be among them, and that he should be more than willing to join the eternal fellowship of Heaven?

Heaven is a better country than this. It is sinless. The plague of sin never comes upon its inhabitants. Its streams are all pure, its sky is cloudless and radiant. The air is pure and invigorating.

In that country God's own bright image is reflected in all its inhabitants. Not one spirit is devoted to the service of sin and Satan. But all are devoted to the service of holiness. They sing,

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." *Rev. 4:8.*

It is a healthy country. Sickness is the fruit of sin, and pain is the offspring of iniquity. If you could visit every hospital, infirmary and sick chamber, you would have some conception of the afflictions of mankind. Afflictions abound among all classes of men. In the palace of the monarch as well as in the cottage of the peasant. The wasting consumption, the raging fever, the suffocating asthma, the depressing la grippe, are common to all classes in this world.

But it is not so with that better land. Its atmosphere is never tainted by diseases. There sickness, suffering and death are unknown. What good news is this to those who have consumption, fever, and asthma; and to the many who are writhing in pain.

Heaven is inhabited by perfect beings. There dwells the perfect God, the blessed Savior, and the Holy Angels. There too dwell the spirits of the just, and of our sainted ancestors. How different is that country from this one.

The saints in Heaven will have clear and unclouded understanding. They will have true and right judgement. Hearts there will be full of celestial love and the spirits there will be courteous, gentle and meek. Nothing shall hurt or vex in all God's holy mountain.

Heaven is a place of supreme enjoyment. This world is full of God's goodness, but the richer blessings are above. There our enjoyments will be overflowing. Here we have only a sip, a gleam, a mere taste. There we will have an ocean of blessedness, a noonday of light, an eternal banquet.

In Heaven the joys will be unceasing. Here they are interrupted. Like Angel's visits which were only occasional. In

Heaven they will be continuous, a rolling sea of glory. Death terminates all earthly enjoyments. But in Heaven there is no end, neither of time or pleasure. No death, but eternal life.

It is written of the Old Testament saints. "But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly." *Heb. 11:16.* This desire is the fruit of regeneration. The new nature tends upward. It is born of the Spirit of God and tends godward. This desire is intensified by spiritual visits to Heaven. The christian ascends heavenward in prayer, in faith, and in hope. He exclaims, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then I would fly away, and be at rest." *Ps. 55:6.*

How truly blessed are all God's redeemed children. They are now on their way to the land of rest, their Father's House, to endless glory. How cheerful should they be. Well may they sing:

"Children of the heavenly King,
As ye journey, sweetly sing;
Sing your Savior's worthy praise,
Glorious in his works and ways.
Lift your eyes, ye sons of Light!
Zion's city is in sight:
There our endless home shall be,
There our Lord we soon shall see."

The aged saint has peculiar hopes, unlike young people, he has few hopes pertaining to this world, his most cherished hopes refer to the future world. Peter says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us unto a lively hope to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away." *1 Peter 1:3,4.* Ask him the ground of his Hope and he will say, "My hope is in the blood of Jesus Christ. I do not hope to be saved because of any thing that I have done."

"All my trust on Thee is stayed:
All my help from Thee I bring."

He believes he is still a child of God, because he feels that God has given him grace to trust in Jesus.

The object and end of the christian's hope is always the same. When the christian starts out on his new life, he hopes to reach Heaven and see Jesus. As he advances in years, the object and end of that hope does not change. His song is,

> "Jerusalem, my happy home!
> Name ever dear to me!
> When shall my labor have an end,
> In joy, and peace, and thee."

Heaven is your true home as christians. There your best friends and kindred dwell. There God your Savior reigns. It is this hope that revives you by the way.

What is it that makes a home so dear to us, and prompts us to say, "There is no place like home." It is not the shrubbery, the furniture, or decoration, but it

is the loved ones there. It is the presence of father, mother, sisters and brothers. We all have friends and loved ones who have fallen asleep in Jesus and are now in Heaven. How true the hymn:

"Many dear to my heart over there,
Are watching and waiting for me."

Our children who died in the covenant and in Christ will be there. They have only withdrawn from the world of sin, sorrow, suffering and death, and gone to live in the summer land of Heaven. Has the Lord taken a child from your arms or from your bosom, think of your child with Jesus who when on earth said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." *Math. 19:14.*

Man's temporal home is the dearest place on earth. When weary, hungry, chilly, absent, or in danger, you think of home. Your home, however hum-

ble, is a sacred place. To be destitute of an earthly home is a great misfortune. Our earthly home ministers principally to the body. It cannot meet the wants of the soul. Man needs a spiritual home where all the necessities of the soul will be met, and that home is Heaven.

How we have longed to see Jesus and be with Him. We have wished that we might like John, recline on that bosom of love, so pure and strong. The happy day will come, and it may not be far distant when we shall be with Jesus in glory.

The supreme desire of my heart is to be like Jesus, and then I shall by and by be with him in glory. It was this desire and hope that inspired Paul to say, "For our conversation is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body."

Phil. 3:20,21. John says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall see him as he is." *1 J. 3:2.* It was this hope that inspired the Psalmist to say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." *Ps. 73:25.* Is it any wonder that the christian becomes homesick for heaven?

CHAPTER XX.

THE CROSSING OF THE JORDAN

Canaan was separated from the Wilderness by the river Jordan. This river the children of Israel were obliged to cross in order to take possession of their Promised Land. In the 4th chapter of Joshua we have an account of the passage of the Israelites over Jordan. So the river of death intervenes this world and the Heavenly Canaan. The Israelites crossed the Jordan at once in a body, but we cross the river of Death continuously, one by one. The crossing began with Abel and will be continued to the end of time.

> "Death like a narrow sea, divides
> This heavenly land from ours."

It was at evening that Christ said on one occasion to his disciples, "Let us

pass over to the other side." *Mark 4:35.* So as the sun of our earthly life is setting, Christ opens to our spiritual vision the Heavenly Canaan and says, "Let us pass over."

The passage of the disciples over the sea was rough and threatening, yet it was made safe and easy by the presence of Christ. Thus while death is fearful to the ungodly, it is joyous and pleasant to the christian. The Master says, "Lo, I am with you alway." *Math. 28:20.* The dying christian can sing:

"Death cannot make our souls afraid,
If God be with us there;
We may walk through its darkest shade,
And never yield to fear."

Be sure to have an interest in the precious blood of Christ. In his righteousness, you can meet death with joy. It is only when death comes and we are not prepared to meet him, that his strokes are heavy.

The removal of a christian from this world is his advantage. While on earth he is separated from his true inheritance and his eternal glory. Paul says, "To live is Christ, but to die is gain." *Phil. 1:21.* David: "Mark the perfect man and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." *Ps. 37:37.* To such an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom is administered. *2 Pet. 1:11.* God said to Abraham, "And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age." *Gen. 15:15.*

In ancient times it was regarded a great misfortune not to be buried with one's kin. Jacob made the request that he should not be buried in Egypt, but with his fathers in their burying ground. *Gen. 47:30.* Joseph took an oath of his children, that they should carry his bones hence. *Gen. 50:25.* How affecting is the request of Barzillia to his king: "I am this day fourscore years old, Let

thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again that I may die in mine own city and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother." *2 Sam. 19:35-37.* If God's people be our people then death will gather us unto them.

Good men die willingly. They are not fetched, or forced, but go. Once a minister was in the act of preaching. The angel of the Lord seemed to lay his hand on his shoulder and whispered, "The Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him." He dropped down where he stood, and in a half hour was with the Lord. The last word on his lips was, "Jesus." He believed in the certainty of his coming and was ready. The time of his coming is uncertain. Hence we are exhorted, "Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." *Math. 25:13.* Paul exclaimed: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at

hand." *2 Tim 4:6.* May we all be ready and waiting for the Master's call to come up higher. Paul knew and felt that he was converted and accepted of God. "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." *2 Tim. 1:12.*

The righteous have a safe passage to the next world. It is true, they must pass through the valley of the shadow of death, but it will be a valley of hope to them. Angels compassed around them in life, and in death they will not forsake them. Lazarus was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. When friends in mournful mood, stand by the saint's death bed, waiting to see him draw his last breath, angels wait for his soul. By inspiration the Prophet gave the righteous this assurance, "When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou

walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." *Is. 43:2.*

Death can do the righteous no harm. Though it separates the soul from the body, it cannot separate either of these from the Lord Jesus Christ. The body is a member of Christ though it is in the grave. Its dust is precious to Christ. Fruit laid away in the earth mellows for winter. So the body is mellowed for the day of resurrection.

The farmer has corn in the barn and in the soil. The latter is more precious because he expects a crop from it. So the dead bodies of saints are more precious than those of the living because of the prospects of the resurrection. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. *1 Cor. 15:42-44.*

Death cannot hurt the soul. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." *Ecc. 12:7.* It is with the soul as it was with Paul and his companions in the sea voyage. The ship was broken to pieces but they were saved. Stephen was stoned to death, and yet he fell asleep. *Acts 7:60.* No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast; only the shadow of death.

It is true that, "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." *Heb. 9:27.* But in the case of the godly their judge is their friend. "The father judgeth no man but hath committed all judgment unto the son." *J. 5:22.* This friend is their Advocate. "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." *1 J. 2:1.*

The godly at death are in a happy and hopeful state. They have a good friend in the world to which they are

going. The lord of that land is Jesus Christ their best friend.

When Jacob saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him to Egypt, his spirit revived. and he resolved to undertake the journey. *Gen. 45 ; 9-27.* When God calls a good man out of this world, he sends just such glad tidings and kind invitations. And his spirit revives when he sees the chariot of death. He is willing to go.

The righteous shall have a joyful entrance into the other world. The dying day of the christian is a day of redemption. It is a time when captives are delivered and prisoners are set free when pilgrims come in from their pilgrimage, and when heirs possess their glorious inheritance.

At death the warfare is over and the race is finished. Then the sheaf is ripe, the likeness is complete, and the probation is ended.

The soul then enters into a state of perfect holiness, intelligence and bliss. The soul is then absolved from sin, sorrow and danger. And it is present with the Lord in the realm of purity, glory and joy.

David says, "The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness." *Ps. 41:3.* God often takes down the earthly tabernacle gradually. He mellows the atmosphere of the dying hour, and makes it radiant with heavenly light. He gives the dying saint a rich experience in fellowship and communion with him. He breaks away the dark cloud of death and restrains Satan in his attacks. He invigorates the graces of the dying saint, gives him glimpses of heavenly glory, and gives him drafts from the fountain head of bliss. He thus gives the saint dying grace.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." *Ps. 116:15.*

The death of saints is under the gracious control of the Lord. The time, place and manner of his death are all under His supervision.

Those who by a true faith have accepted Christ as their Savior are prepared to die in peace. We cannot die the death of the righteous if we are wicked, impenitent, mere moralists, or only professors of righteousness, and not possessors of it.

Paul felt that he had done the work which the Lord gave him to do. He had been Christ's servant and Christ had used him for his own will and purpose. He anticipated a crown. The cross is the way to the crown. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." *2 Tim. 2:12.* The crown is one of righteousness. It is given by virtue of the righteous life of Christ. It is the purchase of his blood.

It is not an earthly crown, nor a crown of olives, or laurels, but a crown of righteousness which becomes the saints of glory.

Paul expected Christ to bestow this crown. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." *2 Tim. 4:8.* Paul knew all this, believed it, and hoped for it.

With the true christian, to die is gain, immediate and eternal gain. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." *Rev. 14:13.*

At death Christ receives the righteous unto himself. Death is the gate of life, the vestibule of glory. At death Mrs. Clarkson exclaimed, "Oh those rays of glory!" Lady Alice Lucy ex-

claimed, "My God, I come flying to thee." Lady Huntington said; "I shall go to my father this night."

How different is the death of an infidel. He exclaims, "I am about to take a leap into the dark." The christian says, "To be absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord."

A life misspent means a soul neglected and lost. A life well spent means the work finished, and the rewards of eternity in sight. Are you ready to take your departure?

It is true, saints do not all die in one and the same manner. There is a diversity in their death as well as in the death of sinners. But the case of the dying saint is always hopeful.

Some die triumphantly as Paul: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Hence-

forth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." *2 Tim. 4:6-8.*

Others have a taste of the joys of heaven while here on earth, and begin the song of Zion while yet in a strange land.

Others die in solid dependence on their Lord Jesus Christ. They firmly believe that the Lord is their God.

While not a few like dying Jacob of old can exclaim, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." *Gen. 49:18.*

Death will remove you from your friends on earth to your friends in Heaven. There your earthly friends will join you if they are true christians.

Death takes you from the temple below to the temple above, from the stream to the fountain.

Life is the day of espousal, death is the wedding day. Death puts out the candle of your mortality, and ushers you into the eternal day where no night shall be.

Saints often die in ecstasy. They have an abundant entrance ministered unto them into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *2 Pet. 1:11.*

Thus did Stephen die with the vision of glory before his eyes, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." *Acts 7:59.*

In prospect of death Paul could triumphantly say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." *2 Tim. 4:7, 8.*

The good Parson said, "The battle is fought—the battle is fought, forever."

Mrs. Talbot of Reading, "Oh! sweet, sweet dying."

Mrs. Manchester who died lately at Pittsburg at the age of 105 years, said,

"I was afraid that God had forgotten me. He has kept me in this world of sorrow so long."

Lady Glenarchy, "If this is dying, it is the pleasantest thing imaginable."

At death the righteous enter upon the life of immortality and ascend to their Lord and Savior.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BODY AND SOUL AT REST

"And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace, thou shalt be buried in a good old age." *Gen. 15:15.* We all desire to be at peace with our fellowmen, our conscience and our God." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." *Rom. 5:1.* "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." *Heb. 4:9.*

When you are prospecting for a home in another locality or town, you ask this question, "Is it a healthy place?" So we look forward to Heaven as our future home and we ask, "What are the sanitary conditions of that celestial city?" The answer is, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow,

nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."*Rev. 21:4.*

There will be no pain of disappointment in Heaven. When you began life you anticipated much, but how little of what you anticipated did you realize. In Heaven there will be no pain of weariness. It may be hours since you quit work, but you do not feel rested. Your ankles ache, your spirit flags, and you want rest. In Heaven there will be no more stooping until the back aches. No more calculating until the brain is bewildered.

There will be no more carpentering, for the mansions are all built. No more masoning, for the walls are all ready. No more agriculture, for the harvests are spontaneous. No more wearisome toil, pain or sickness.

In this world you have had many domestic disappointments. But in heaven there will be no such disappointments.

No blasted hopes. There all things will be better than you anticipated. The robes will be richer, the crowns brighter, the temple grander, and the throng mightier.

Heaven is a place of perpetual rest. "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest." *Job 3:17.* It is a place of perpetual joy. "In thy presence is fullness of joy." *Ps. 16:11.*

Have you a weak and frail body? Think of your glorified body. "When this corruption shall put on incorruption." Are you weary? think of the saint's everlasting rest. Are you sick? think of the saint's health. Are you poor? think of the saint's riches. Are you homeless? think of your heavenly home. Are you lonely? think of the companion of saints. Have you sorrow? think of your heavenly joys. "For our light affliction, which is but for a mo-

ment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." *2 Cor. 4:17.*

Do you stagger at God's mysterious Providence? look above. Mr. Astor in fording a river on horseback, became dizzy. The remedy was to look up, and not down to the passing water. Are you in imminent danger? Close your eyes and by faith look to God. And in the hour of death, close your eyes and trust your Savior.

In Heaven there will be no more poverty. In the next world all of Christ's poor will not be at disadvantage as in this world. In heaven there will be no occasion for alms houses for they will all be princes. No rents to pay and no garments to buy. In Heaven there will be no hovels to live in, no hard crusts to eat and no insufficient apparel to wear. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more." *Rev. 7:16.*

In Heaven there will be no more parting. All our earthly associations will sometime be broken up. But when you once have passed the heavenly portals, you are through with such scenes forever.

In Heaven there will be no pain of body. In this world the human race is pierced through and through with sharp distress. In Heaven no malaria floats in the air, no bruised feet tread the streets. Here in this world is a Robert Hall who never saw a well day. Edward Payson whose body was ever torn by disease, and here Richard Baxter passed through untold physical torture.

There will be no spiritual enemies to mar one's happiness.

We enter Heaven immediately after death. "To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." *Luke 23:43.* "We are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

2 Cor. 5:8. "Lazarus died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." *Luke 16:22.*

We do not naturally desire death as it is the dissolving of a lovely and beautiful casket. But the apostle was willing to cross over Death's river, because of the beautiful land that lies beyond.

In a kingdom very few of the subjects are permitted to enter the palace of the king, or see him, much less approach his throne. This is reserved for only a privileged few. In the Jewish economy, none was permitted to enter that part of the tabernacle called Holy of Holies, except the High Priest, and he once only in a year.

But the innumerable multitude are permitted to enter the New Heaven and the New Earth, to enter the Holy City, the Jerusalem which is above. And pluck the fruit from the Tree of Life. They are permitted to enter the palace of the great King, and stand be-

fore the white throne and before the Lamb. They are represented as having palms in their hands. These are the symbols of peace and victory.

They first bore the cross and now the crown. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." *Rev. 7:14.* They have thus run with patience the race set before them.

"And they cried with a loud voice saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen." *Rev. 7:10-12.*

Thus too shall the redeemed and the bloodwashed unveil their heads, and cast their crowns at the feet of the Great Jehovah, and sing his eternal praises.

All who die in Christ live with him and one another. Where are the Patriarchs and Prophets, the Apostles and Martyrs, the Church Fathers and Reformers? Where are our godly ancestors? Where are those whom you mourn today? That departed father, mother, sister and brother; that departed husband, wife, child and friend? If they died in Christ, they are with him in Heaven.

The redeemed in Heaven embrace the souls of those who have died in the faith, from righteous Abel to the present. Some of these were our friends and kindred. Once they were subject to the infirmities of our human race. They have sinned and they have suffered. They have sickened and they have died.

The ties that bound them to us on earth, seemed to be broken. And as we placed their remains in the grave, we seemed to give them a final farewell. But they have not perished. They that

die in the Lord, and have joined the other part of the Church family which is in Heaven.

Yonder in that far off land are their glorified spirits. John saw a great multitude of all nations, kindred, people and tongue. *Rev. 7:9.*

This is the happy conditions of those that are in Heaven. Who of us have not contributed to the company of glorified spirits in Heaven. Have you given up an aged father or mother? Think where he or she is. Have you given up a husband, a wife, or a darling child? Think where the absent one is. Many a Rachael is weeping because her child is not. These precious spirits are in Heaven, ripe for immortality.

What a happy meeting place Heaven will be, between husband and wife, brother and sister, parents and children and between friend and friend.

On earth families are sometimes broken up by removals and death. But in

Heaven families will have no such disturbance or separation.

There we shall be joined with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, with Moses and David, with Peter, John and Paul. There we shall be joined with our dear redeemed kindred, and above all with our elder brother Jesus Christ. "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven." *Math. 8:11.*

Heaven will be a place of reunions. Many who sleep in the old village church burying yard, will be there. Many who recline among the fountains and sculpture of the city cemeteries will be there. Many who perished in battle or went down into the deep will be there. "And I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth;

yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." *Rev. 14:13.*

The grave yard is a resting place to the Saints — a cemetery — a sleeping chamber—God's acre. We may see written on every grave stone: "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." *J. 5:28,29.* For the comfort of every believer Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." *J. 11:25.*

The grave is not a strange house. Many of our friends are there. Perhaps a father, a mother, a sister, a brother, or a child is there. Their ashes are peacefully slumbering there. The Lord perfumed the grave by his own presence, and gave it a holy consecration.

Death brings us to our eternal reward, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." *Phil. 1:21.* "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." *Math. 25:34.*

The most sacred and solemn thing that we are called upon to witness in this world is a deathbed scene. We tenderly watch over the departing one. The pulse grows feebler and the breathing becomes laborious. At last he ceases to breathe. The gate of death opens and he departs out of this life. We in almost breathless silence whisper, "He's gone." This is the physical side of dying, but it has another side which indicates the spirit in which one departs out of this life. We will consider a few incidents: The mother of John Wesley said, "Children when I am gone, sing a song of praise to God." She felt that in her death she would enter into perfect

rest and bliss which would be an occasion of gratitude and praise to God.

Cecil said to his dying mother, "Mother are you not afraid to die?" She replied, "No," "Why not?" Her reply was, "Because God has said, "Fear not, When thou passeth through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." *Is. 3:2.*

How true the hymn :

"Death cannot make our souls afraid,
If God be with us there;
We may walk through its darkest shade,
And never yield to fear."

Robert Bolton longing for his departure exclaimed, "Oh, when will this good hour come."

When John Brown of Haddington, was laid low in sickness, he was heard to utter these words, "God is an unchanging Rock." It is when things change around us that we can best judge

whether we actually have faith in an unchanging God.

Mrs. Elizabeth Stoker a parishioner of the writer who died at the age of 81 years, said, "I feel that my faith is very strong and that I stand upon a Rock." She was a woman who was faithful to her religious duties and developed a strong christian character and faith. Such die in a state of gracious security.

Well may we exclaim, "Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his." *Num. 23:10.*

Many like Job exclaim, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come," *Job 14:14.* Waiting implies a preparation. You can best wait for company when you are prepared to receive it. So the christian can best wait for death when he is prepared for it. A holy life is the best preparation we can make.

When John Quincy Adams was 80 years old he was met on a street in

Boston by an old friend who thus addressed him: "Good morning, and how is John Quincy Adams today?" The Ex-President replied: "Thank you, John Quincy Adams himself is well, sir, quite well. But the house in which he lives at present is becoming dilapidated. It is tottering upon its foundation. Time and the seasons have nearly destroyed it. And I think John Quincy Adams will have to move out of it soon." Then he moved on with the aid of his staff. It was not long afterward that he had his second and fatal stroke of paralysis. His last words were, "This is the last of earth, I am content." With calm resignation he awaited the dissolving of his earthly house, and with a firm faith he looked for a house not made with hands, eternal in the heaven.

During the final sickness of Ex-President Hayes, he said to the old family

physician, "I know that I shall now see Lucy." referring to his wife. This meeting of our loved ones in the next world is the fondest hope of the christian.

"Let saints below in concert sing
With those to glory gone;
For all the servants of our King
In earth and heaven are one.

One family—we dwell in him—
One church above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.

E'en now, by faith, we join our hands
With those that went before,
And greet the ransomed, blessed bands,
Upon the eternal shore."

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